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NADIA;

OR, OUT OF THE BEATEN TRACK.

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OR,

OUT OF THE BEATEN TRACK.

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN OF

R. ORLOFFSKY,

BY THE BARONESS LANGENAU.

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NADIA;

OR,

Out of the Beaten Track.

CHAPTER I.

THE days which now followed at Biälastolby were quiet and uneventful; they brought with them that sense of perfect peace which we should like to keep with us for ever, not allowing life to flow onward. How delightful if we could lay hold on that restfulness of joy for ages, and not see it sink down in the flowerless mist of past remembrances. We sometimes happen to hit upon such pages in a book, which we want to dwell on, in order not to spoil our impressions through the further development of the story. It may also be that a chance melody fills the heart with such an overflowing sense of peace and joy that we wish to keep the harmonious wave with us, and prevent it from dying away in the trembling air. But the story does not stop, the strains die away, and life would quickly lose the bright colours of human bliss if it were steeped in immobility. The 15th of October had been

fixed upon for Nadia's marriage with Dmitry. The day was drawing near, yet the long weeks which had passed since their betrothal seemed to flow together in one single day of perfect bliss, the more perfect, perhaps, as their lives had known so many storms. They had the feeling of having reached a high promontory, from which but one footpath led down to the blooming gardens stretched out at their feet. In one respect only they did not stand still—their hearts became more and more closely knit together with every passing day. Nadia hardly knew herself how entirely every mental difference between them had vanished: it was not only Dmitry she loved, everything connected with him had grown dear to her. This change had not been produced by logical and convincing proofs, but it was perhaps the more complete and perfect because it was the harmony of life which had brought it about. She never asked herself whether Dmitry's opinions were right or not; whatever he did was right in her eyes, and this sufficed to her loving heart. His kind and even intercourse with his inferiors, his entire want of vehemence or irritation, his readiness to do good without expecting any reward, filled her heart with joy, and quenched her thirst after truth. And she observed with joy how the general trust in him grew, how the peasants came more and more frequently to consult him, how his just claims were no longer met with murmurings, nor his kindness taken for paltry

weakness. Dmitry had given the necessary orders for money being advanced out of the manor cash at a very small interest, in order to enable the peasants to pay their taxes in due time. This measure provoked the anger of Akime Sabuldaïeff in the highest degree, for having been till now the only banker of the peasantry, he considered Dmitry's proceeding as an encroachment on his rights.

Autumn had begun to clothe Biälastolby in its many-coloured rich dressing. The purple leaves of the aspens and maple trees mingled with the yellowish tints of the lime trees, the surly old oaks still looked fresh and green, and the wind rustled gaily through their wrinkled leaves.

On the fields, where a short time ago rests of straw were lying about, a dense cover of green young oats was shooting up. The horizon had enlarged, so to speak, and the eye pierced the far distant mist, which hovered on the border of the cloudless September sky, taking in a stray church tower or some roofs of village houses, where nothing but black smoke had been visible till now. Troops of ravens were hovering over the fields, and clouds of sparrows, scared away from the barn by the noise of the thrashing-machine, clustered on the cytises near by. The swallows had left long ago, and the cranes were no longer to be seen, only the larks fluttered upwards here and there, loudly welcoming the clear young day.

Once on a Sunday morning—it was about the

second half of September—Nadia declared her intention of going to mass with the rest of the family. Till now she had never gone to church, and Anna Grigorievna had never urged her to do it.

"You do not want to be behind the others, cousin," laughed Volodia, who always accompanied his pious mother to church, except when he happened to oversleep himself. He used to be very attentive during service, from time to time only eyeing the pretty peasant-girls. Anna Grigorievna was always very pious, but to-day especially she seemed to pray with a particular fervour, and bent her shaking old limbs oftener than usual. Nadia did not pray, at least, not in words, but she felt greatly impressed with the service, in spite of the horrid singing and reading. Her heart was overflowing with gratitude to God and love to her neighbours. The sight of the kneeling multitude gave her the comforting feeling of God's nearness, for was it possible to believe that such ardent prayers lost themselves in the air?

After mass Anna Grigorievna joined the general thanksgiving. On hearing the tender appeal of the Saviour, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," Nadia was struck with the words, as if hearing them for the first time. Here at last, she thought, must be the real haven, the refuge of love, inexhaustible, tender love, open to all without exception. Here, in the Saviour's arms, rest, true rest, must be found! As these

thoughts crossed her brain, her eyes happened to fall on Tomiline, who was standing close to her. He belonged to the parish of Biälastolby, and therefore always went there for mass. Her eyes remained riveted on his kind old face, for it seemed to her as if she ought to find there a solution of her doubts.

"She is here for the first time," whispered Volodia in his ear.

The service was over; Anna Grigorievna sat down in her droshky under the porch of the church.

"I am a little tired, and do not feel equal to return on foot," she said, as if excusing herself. She always found it very hard to own her present weakness.

Nadia walked home through the garden with Tomiline and Dmitry, while Volodia remained behind to chatter with one of the old beehive keepers, with whom he often went out to shoot.

"Why did you look at me during the reading of the Gospel, Nadeshda Sergeïevna?" asked Tomiline of the young girl.

"Because I wondered whether you had found the peace and comfort which the Gospel promises to those who come——"

Tomiline sighed.

"Alas! who can say to whom he has turned in life's sorrows?"

"Well, you see," she exclaimed vivaciously (they had already entered the garden, and were approaching

the house), "if even you are not able to say this in true faith, what must other people do? For eighteen hundred years this call has resounded from the altar, and how many have been comforted by it?"

"Really? do you fancy that faith does not help us in the days of physical suffering? Look at yourself, don't you feel happier now that you are at peace with everybody?"

"On the contrary, Feodor Vassilievitch," answered Nadia, smiling, "I feel as if my present happiness made me forgetful of my neighbour's wants."

"Nadia, Nadia, how can you torture yourself in this way, as if you had not the right to be happy?" cried Dmitry; "would it be better for the unfortunate and bereaved ones on earth if they ceased to pray and hope, and began to hate each other?"

They now sat down on the bench before the house.

"I never talked of these things with you, Dmitry," Nadia began again; "I thought you avoided these conversations—because—well, because your opinions differed from those of your mother."

"Oh!" cried Tomiline, laughing; "you thought so on account of the laboratory, in which Dmitry Alexandrovitch spent so many hours a day. But he has quite given it up, has he not?"

Dmitry was silent.

"I am not joking," said Nadia. "I know that I have not yet got a strong and firm faith; I have still to learn a great deal."

"Knowledge," said Dmitry, "is the lamp which lightens up darkness, and to which even the sun can't be compared. Fancy that I am shut up in a room from which daylight is excluded, and people tell me I have not the right to leave it until the key is found. But the key is not to be found, or if found, does not fit the lock. And in the meantime I know that out of doors the sun is shining, and the view is enchanting, and yet I remain in the dark room, because some system is not decided, some marvellous key——"

"Well spoken for a naturalist!" cried Nadia, while her eyes beamed with the purest sympathy.

"Do you think that faith and science interfere with each other? Faith certainly can't invent the law of the weight of bodies; but then, science can't comfort me in my grief."

"Hush!" cried Nadia, placing her small palm on his lips; "don't speak of grief!"

"Do not be afraid, my dear," said Tomiline, smiling; "you have suffered enough already."

At this moment Volodia rushed up to them with a beaming countenance. He had some letters and papers in his hand.

"A letter for me from abroad!" he exclaimed, drawing a small bluish envelope out of the bundle. The address was written in a very youthful female hand, and the French stamp was marked Biarritz.

"If it were from Jenny!" he cried, in a trembling voice.

It was in fact from her, and consisted of eight pages, the last of which was crossed in true girlish fashion.

Jenny did not seem at all unhappy to have left Russia. She expressed her regrets at not being at Nikolsky any more, but gave, nevertheless, a bright and gay description of all her travelling impressions. She wrote as follows :—

". . . The sea, this eternally roaring and moving steppe, I doat upon it! We take our bath daily, and then go out in a small boat. I delight in the strong waves, and am not a bit afraid of them. We have just returned from an excursion to Spain, which was delightful. On the other side of the Pyrenees everything is as flat as with us at home. Fancy! But here are no trees, and the fields are quite shrivelled up with the heat, and have a greyish, yellowish look. The country has the same sunny, lazy look as the people at home. The dome at Burgos is simply magnificent. It is very gay here. We made the acquaintance of some Englishmen. I like them so much better than Frenchmen. Whatever they say, you feel it is true. We play at lawn-tennis every day. You would delight in this play, I am sure. It is very amusing, too, to ride on donkeys. I don't know how long we are going to stay here. Mamma intends to go to Nice from here. Everybody says it is so much nicer than this place. But we shall spend the winter at Petersburg for sure, so I say 'da svidania,' and that very soon."

The letter suddenly finished here with the two letters E. O. Jenny had long meditated upon the way in which she ought to sign her name, and had at last hit upon this laconic signature. The beginning of the letter had not cost her less pains, and she had spoiled five whole sheets of paper. First she had written "Mon cher Vladimir," but this seemed too familiar; then she wrote "Monsieur," but this was too cold by far; the way of saying "Cher M. Koretzky" displeased her equally; so she thought it best to begin without addressing him at all.

The perusal of this letter somewhat damped Volodia's high spirits. She seemed too delighted with her journey, and a deep sense of jealousy awoke within his heart. She would not be in Petersburg before next winter, and did not express a word of regret at this! He folded the letter and put it away in his breastpocket, looking very gloomy.

"Count Sokolnitzky has consented to be guardian to the lady of your choice," said Dmitry; "the steward at Nikolsky wrote to me this morning about it."

But even this piece of good news did not succeed in clearing up Volodia's gloomy looks.

"When are you going out to shoot?" asked Nadia of him.

"The deuce I know!" he answered hotly.

"Won't you come and have your lunch with us, Feodor Vassilievitch; you must be devilish hungry."

They all got up, but they had hardly taken a few steps onwards before the housekeeper was seen hurrying on towards them.

"Dmitry Alexandrovitch! come as quickly as you can," she cried; "there's something the matter with Anna Grigorievna!"

They rushed up into the house and found her lying senseless in her armchair.

CHAPTER II.

ANNA GRIGORIEVNA recovered once more. Her swoon lasted for three hours, until the doctor came; then consciousness and speech were restored. Nothing remained but a great weakness, which lasted for several days. A death-like, yellowish hue covered her face, her eyes had a dull and fixed look, and the doctor shook his head in a grave way. He did not think there was any imminent danger, but he had no real trust in the future. "The danger is past for the present time," he said, wiping his damp brow with his handkerchief, "and with a great deal of care we may hope to prevent another attack." These words, however, did not deceive Nadia or Dmitry; both knew that a darkening shadow was threatening their young happiness, and that there was an end to those blissful days which they had been enjoying so fully.

It was a dull, grey morning in September. Anna Grigorievna had not left her room for six days. Nadia was sitting at the window of her bedroom expecting every moment to be called away to her

aunt. Dmitry was not at home; he had gone to look at the timber in the wood. The rain had been pouring down since noon, and was splashing against the window-panes. Nadia sat gazing dully at the raindrops chasing one another on the sandstones of the porch, or watching obstinately the small water pools forming everywhere, as people do when their brain is working, and they have no attention left but for the most futile objects. "Now they are going to overflow," she ejaculated mentally, when a somewhat larger drop fell into the small hollow, while her thoughts carried her far away into the past. A year ago, about this time, she had gone to Moscow with her sister and Neradovitch. It had been just such a cloudy, grey September day. She remembered all the smallest details of their preparations and departure. She had just accomplished her eighteenth year then. What a change the passing year had brought! not only the outward world; no, her inner life, her wishes and understanding, had undergone a thorough change. Yesterday it had been her birthday again. How unlike it had been to the other one, which she spent in the small, dull lodging of Toumanoff at O——. It is true it had not been spent in gaiety: the grave illness of her aunt threw a deep shadow over the whole family. But what tender love surrounded her now, instead of the dry and rigid duty to which she had devoted herself a year ago. Yes, her life had blossomed, just as a tree can blossom

once more after having had its buds nipped by the biting frost. For the first time she felt entirely free from all her former ties, and she confessed openly how delighted she was at it.

She opened her window; the rain was still pouring down. "Poor Mitia," she thought; and suddenly she felt a great longing for Dmitry, as if he was threatened by some great misfortune from which she alone could shield him. "Why must he always be overworking himself, as if the estate could not thrive without him?" she went on, quite forgetting how little these thoughts suited her former severe ideas about the fulfilment of one's duties.

Suddenly the clattering of a horse's feet resounded on the wet pavement. A rider stopped at the gate; but, instead of the expected figure of Dmitry, she recognised the coachman, who had been to town to fetch the post-bag.

"How drenched you are!" she cried, through the window.

"It does not matter, Nadeshda Sergeïevna," he answered, shaking his wet hair. "I've brought a letter for you."

"Did you meet Dmitry Alexandrovitch?" asked Nadia, only thinking of Dmitry, and never giving a thought to the letter in her hand. The address of the letter was in her brother-in-law's handwriting, the envelope, of coarse grey paper, was closed with sealing-wax. She examined the seal to convince

herself that it had not been interfered with, then she looked at the stamp—it bore the mark of St. Plebeni Fashlik.

But a growing uneasiness took possession of Nadia as she broke the seal. The letter ran as follows:—

"MUCH HONOURED NADESHDA SERGEÏEVNA,—

I consider it my duty to acquaint you with the whole extent of my misfortune. My wife was arrested three days ago, during my absence. On my return the maid told me all the details. The police came down upon them about nine o'clock in the evening. There was not a single man in the whole house, and my wife did not even find the opportunity of burning the most important papers. The maid-servant was also arrested, but set free again, as there were no proofs against her. I am going to change my lodgings now. You can't imagine how broken-hearted I am, but I must take care of myself on account of our great work. When Sacha was arrested, she whispered in the servant's ear, 'Try and let Nadia know; she has powerful friends, perhaps she can do something for us.' I don't know whether you have any friends or not, but I doubt your readiness to serve us. Those who cease to care for the work itself generally turn their back on those who go on drudging for it. Sacha and I often talk of you and pity you. She has not ceased to love you, and trusts you are not altered; as for me, I doubt the

success of the present appeal, yet I thought it my duty to write to you. This letter will be dropped at some small railway station, as I think it is the safest way of avoiding the official thirst for knowledge; I also think it safer to seal it. But in forwarding this letter I know it is a simple formality I am fulfilling, for when did happy people care for poor relations? especially when they have the misfortune to belong to those who are not to be trusted.

"Yours faithfully,

"LEVAN TOUMANOFF."

The childish precautions taken by the prince had proved perfectly futile: his letter had been opened, read, copied, and then forwarded to its address.

Nadia did not at first feel offended at her brother-in-law's reproaches; she was too much taken up with her sister's misfortune. "Poor, poor Sacha!" she repeated, blushing at her own great happiness. The face of her sister seemed to rise up before her, exercising a tender attraction on her; a deep pity overcame her as she thought of her distress. "Poor, poor Sacha! she so soft and irresolute, has at last fallen a victim to her convictions." She perused the letter a second time. This time the reproaches contained in it made her feel deeply guilty towards her relations; a flush of shame mounted to her brow. What! Did Toumanoff really believe that she would not raise her little finger to help her sister? Her

behaviour of late had given him the right to judge her thus, but she would show him that he was wrong. Her power was not great, she did not possess those mighty connections at which he hinted, but she might try what Boroffsky or Count Sokolnitzky could do. The first thing would be to get to her sister; if she could not obtain her pardon, she might sustain her morally, and try and inspire her with those soothing thoughts which had filled her of late. She resolved to start at once for O——. But when she communicated this idea to Dmitry, he refused most decidedly.

"To let you off thus on the eve of our marriage! To let you travel over a thousand versts quite alone! It is madness!" he exclaimed, with such a passionate vehemence that she hardly recognised the self-possessed Dmitry.

She did not answer, only bent her head with an expression of deep despair.

"Mamma is ill, very ill, you know. I can't leave her——'

"I intend to go alone, Dmitry," she answered, without looking at him.

"Alone! impossible! What! are you going to abandon my mother in her present state? Is this your love for me, that you don't mind leaving me?"

"Not mind! How can you talk thus? Do you really think it is easy for me to go away?"

A torrent of passionate words broke from Dmitry's

lips. To hear him it seemed as if his newly-found happiness was to be torn away from him, as if this separation was to be a lifelong one.

"I am not going for long, Dmitry," she said, quietly; "O—— is only a three days' journey from here. If I leave to-morrow—this conversation took place on a Wednesday—you will get a telegram from me on Monday evening. I won't stay more than three or four days there, and on Sunday week I'll be back again."

"You talk of all this as if I had no voice in the matter at all."

"I am very sorry, Dmitry, but indeed I could not be happy here with you, knowing my sister to be in prison, threatened with a severe sentence; let me only try and see her once, at least. You read Toumanoff's letter, did you not? Well, these reproaches would pursue me my whole life, for they are true, Dmitry. I forgot——"

Dmitry made an indignant movement with his hand. What did he care for those dishonourable relations of hers, who only wanted to drag her back into the mire out of which he had drawn her?

"Did they ever remember you?" he asked passionately. "Did they ever show you any love or kindness? Give them up, darling; forget them, my poor deluded girl!"

He sat down beside her, took both her hands in his, and said in a beseeching tone,—

"Of what use can you be to your sister, even supposing you penetrate into her prison? But I tell you that your whole journey will be taken in vain: they will not let you in!"

"I shall ask Boroffsky; he won't refuse me."

"Boroffsky! you trust him! what! you have no worse enemy, for aught I know."

Nadia raised her large eyes wonderingly to his face.

"No, Mitia, there you are mistaken. I hurt his self-love, I confess, but he won't refuse me an interview with Sacha on this account. Boroffsky is no mean nature.

Dmitry exhausted all his arguments in vain. He knew that he was right, but he felt impotent against her quiet resistance. He might have tried to forbid her to go, and he knew that she would have submitted, but he did not think he had the right to do this.

"Wait a little, at least," he pleaded; "as soon as mamma is better, I'll go with you."

"No, Mitia, if I go, I'll go at once. Sacha can't wait; who knows where she may be in a week? I can travel alone."

He paced the room in silence.

"Well," he said, at last, "I consent to let you go, but I wish you to take Aniussa with you."

"Aniussa? How can my aunt do without her?"

"Never mind; we'll do without her. You will be,

at least, in trustworthy hands. When are you going away?"

"To-morrow, I think."

They resolved upon telling Anna Grigorievna that Nadia's father had been taken suddenly ill, and that she was going to nurse him; this would not distress her as much as the truth.

She remained perfectly quiet on hearing this news.

"Go, my darling," she said, kissing Nadia's forehead. "You are right; we ought to honour our parents. Give my best love to Sergius Petrovitch. Is Mitia going with you?"

"No; he is going to stay with you. I am taking Aniussa with me."

"Very well, darling, only be careful; don't catch cold."

Nadia and Dmitry turned away to hide their tears, as they saw this weakness of their mother's will and mind.

"I'll say good-bye to you now, dearest aunt; you might perhaps be asleep to-morrow when I leave."

"Good-bye, darling. Christ be with you. Come back as soon as you can."

And the old lady folded the young girl's form in her embrace, and blessed her with trembling fingers.

On the following day Dmitry and Volodia accompanied Nadia to the station. There were but few travellers. The large station-house looked desolate

on this rainy day, and the train itself had a lazy air, as if unwilling to start on its intended journey. On one side of the platform a small crowd of peasants, their bags and wallets on their shoulders, were waiting for the signal of departure. In the first-class waiting-room seven or eight men were breakfasting, from time to time exchanging some chance observation. The greasy waiter, half asleep, served the dishes lazily, and rarely moved before being summoned two or three times. A fat landed-proprietor, with numerous bundles and two dogs, was sitting in a corner, softly slumbering. They all knew that half an hour would have to pass before the third bell was rung.

Dmitry hurried Nadia into the railway carriage, and commended her to the guard, who promised to watch over her. They all tried to talk of the most indifferent things, and Volodia even made some jesting remarks, but he broke down suddenly.

"You will send me a telegram from Kharkoff, won't you?" said Dmitry, for the tenth time at least.

"Yes; and you'll take care of mamma?"

A short silence ensued, after which Dmitry said,—

"You have not forgotten anything, have you?"

"Nothing;" and she tried to smile.

The second bell was rung.

"Please to leave the carriage," said the guard; "we are starting in a few minutes."

"Good-bye," said Dmitry, pressing her in his arms; "good-bye, and be careful; good-bye, darling."

And he sprang out on the platform; but here, where a barrier rose between him and Nadia, he felt perfectly overwhelmed. His heart gave a great throb, and he could not get rid of the gloomy thoughts which crowded upon him, nor feel quite sure of seeing her again in a few days. He raised himself on tip-toe, gazing through the window, and taking leave not only of her, but of those surroundings which were to be hers for several hours.

"Do you feel comfortable?" he asked again. "Aniussa, take care of Nadeshda Sergeïevna."

"Do not be uneasy, Dmitry Alexandrovitch," answered the housekeeper; "nothing will happen to the young lady."

And a tender, good-natured smile lit up her old face.

Some minutes elapsed. Dmitry repeated the same question two or three times. The last bell resounded, the final signal was given, followed by a deep, strange stillness, then the train moved slowly on, and the boiler let out its thick clouds of steam, sending them straight up to the dull grey sky.

As soon as Nadia was left alone, she gave herself up to her deep despair: burning, scalding tears ran down her pallid cheeks, and her eyes remained riveted on the place where her old home was. It seemed to her as if some mighty hand had drawn her out of her beloved circle, and thrown her there, where she would never more know the bliss which had for one short moment shone over her desolate life.

CHAPTER III.

ON the 28th of September, three days after Nadia's departure, the case of Gondsevsky was brought before the justice court. This time Konevetzky had made haste, and finished the inquest in three weeks, and a month had sufficed to draw the bill of indictment. It is true, there was no difficulty in proving guilt; it was plain by the clearest evidence.

This affair created a great deal of interest in the town. Many people wondered whether Dmitry had been in the right to have Gondsevsky arrested without the help of the police, and in the eyes of those who always side with the guilty party the Pole began to take the form of a martyr. Besvidoff even wrote an article in a Petersburg paper in this sense.

It was therefore not to be wondered at if the audience-room was quite full, and the crowd outside thronged towards the entrance door to get admittance into it. Gondsevsky had not expected to become the hero of the day. When he was led in he gazed with a dull look at the people who were

breathlessly waiting to hear the attorney-general's assistant and the defending lawyer exchange hard words on his account. His personal fate did not interest any one; but he was to be defended by the light of the town, the descendant of Chmelnitzky, Sabolduk, while the accusation was brought forward by the assistant of the attorney-general, Soboriansky, a man known for his eloquence. The ladies were very nervous; and, alas! none of them on Dmitry's side. As he seldom came to town, except on business, he had not deemed it necessary to cultivate town society, and the brilliant wives of the officials nourished within their breasts more or less hostile feelings towards him. It was no wonder, therefore, that the article of Mr. Besvidoff found a ready echo among the fair sex.

One of the most zealous supporters of poor, innocent Gondsevsky was the wife of the director of the excise, Clementina Adamovna Brosoffsky, an excessively pretty woman, with splendid curly hair and small high-bred feet, which she was very fond of showing. All the young, or perhaps still more all the elder, officials, were head over ears in love with this beautiful flirt, who chirped most sweetly with them all.

"I can't allow you to consider me a flirt," she used to say, blushing and simpering. This time, sitting in the first row of the spectators, she devoted all her attention to the vice-governor, who wooed her the more zealously as his better-half was as devoid of

outward charm as of sweetness of character. "I deem this Gondsevsky a most interesting man; what do you think of him?" she whispered in his ear, sympathising with the criminal—firstly, because he was a countryman of hers; secondly, because it was the fashion to consider every man a hero who tried to commit a murder.

The miserable appearance of Gondsevsky was somewhat of a disillusion to her; yet she did not cease to proclaim her sympathy for him. There was another lady in the room not less eager to defend him. This was Catherine Nicolaïevna Bondareff. She had been long divorced from her husband, and was now a warm supporter of women's rights. She smoked and drank like a trooper, and in her quality of partisan of free love, she gave small select parties to her numerous adorers, where high-flown sentences, mostly borrowed from periodicals and papers, were exchanged. But to-day she observed with a displeased face that the young men of the best society avoided her in the presence of the other ladies. Even two of her most zealous adorers, the clever member of a special commission, Bielhoff, and the not less clever officer, Baron von Kratzfuss, looked away, in order not to greet her. She made a sarcastic observation on this subject to her neighbour Besvidoff.

Gondsevsky, in answer to the judge's question, declared his innocence. Then followed the reading

of the bill of indictment, upon which the examination of the witnesses began.

Dmitry was the first to be called in. Without much ado, plainly and quietly, he stated that he had been shot at from behind the trees in the hollow, and told how he had given the orders to arrest Gondsevsky, and how the substantial proofs of his guilt, such as his cigar-case, the cartridge under his bed, and the bullet in the field, had been found by-and-by. The president listened to him with the expression of a man who knows the whole business beforehand, and only wishes to have done with it as quickly as possible. A murmur of dissatisfaction ran through the public. The stated facts were too plain; the romance was fading away.

"This man is simply a pickpocket, I think," said Mme. Brosoffsky.

"Of course he is," answered the vice-governor, an expression of awe crossing his face, for he saw his better-half quite close to him.

The prisoner's lawyer now put some questions to Dmitry.

"You allowed yourself to arrest this gentleman upon your own responsibility," he observed, with an expression of withering contempt.

"The representative of authority, the volost elder, lives six versts from Biälastolby. It was no easy matter to get him as quickly as he was wanted," answered Dmitry, in a railing tone.

"I don't want your opinion; state simply the facts, please. You thought you had the right to arrest this man, did you?"

"I did."

Sabolduk gazed solemnly at the spectators.

"Very well; the jury will judge you. They will say whether you had the right to behave thus."

The president made a movement as if to stop Sabolduk.

"Well, I shan't insist upon this. But with what right did you suspect Mr. Gondsevsky when you heard the shot?"

Dmitry could hardly master his indignation.

"I told you just now that the bullet passed straight before my nose; that it could, therefore, only have been fired at *me*. I suspected Gondsevsky because I knew that he had threatened more than once to kill me."

"A most awful slander!" hissed the accused through his teeth.

The president did not deign to listen to him, and the lawyer threw a most contemptuous look at his client, while going on with the examination.

"So you state that you heard the whistle of a ball? Please to tell me how this happened."

"I have told all that I know, and can't alter anything in my evidence," answered Dmitry impatiently.

"Please to enter that the witness refuses to answer my questions," cried Sabolduk, turning to the president.

But the president did not seem to hear this request. His look of weariness had entirely disappeared.

"Call in the next witness, Vladimir Alexandrovitch Koretzky," he said, speaking through his nose, addressing the constable.

"They almost seem to be scorning the holy rights of the accused," whispered Mme. Bondareff.

But Besvidoff did not listen to her. He was preparing a new article for the papers.

"What a lovely dress you have! It suits you to perfection," lisped Baron von Kratzfuss to Clementina Adamovna.

"Do you think so? Yet it is very plain."

Volodia's deposition did not throw any new light on the affair. He only corroborated the facts that had already been stated, and Sabolduk made the wicked observation that a brother could do nothing else. Volodia was already leaving the room, when the lawyer arrested him with the question,—

"Can you state that the shot was fired at your brother?"

"Of course I can. I heard the shot when I was ten paces ahead of him."

"Perhaps twelve?"

"Perhaps. I did not count them."

"At such a distance you can't hear the whistle of a ball."

The president thought fit to interfere.

"Is it necessary to hear the whistle of a ball," he said, "in order to state whether a shot was fired or not?"

"Certainly not," answered Sabolduk. "I only wanted to turn the attention of the jury upon the fact that not every shot means manslaughter—that there are unshotted charges."

The president shrugged his shoulders.

A long row of witnesses now followed. First came ten peasants from Nikolsky, who had heard the shot on their way home from Biälastolby, then the starost Philip, and those three labourers who had watched over Gondsevsky at the post-house. It was proved by them that the latter had in fact been out very late in the evening, that he had had his double-barrelled gun with him, and that the cigar-case found in the field belonged to him. But when the ball was mentioned, which had been discovered by a peasant on the following day, Sabolduk tried to shake the evidence.

"You say that you found this small bullet on the field, on the right side of the road, leading to the manor-house; was it not so?" he asked of Philip.

"Yes, sir."

"But you said on another occasion that the ball had been lying on the left side of the road, I think."

"Perhaps I did, but really I don't know.

"I can't allow you to interfere in this way with the witnesses," said the attorney-general's assistant.

"I shall have finished at once."

Philip turned away.

"No, wait a moment, my good fellow; another question. Are you very sharp-sighted?

"Do you mean about my eyes?—rather so, as much as most people."

"As most people. Well, well; yet you discovered this small bullet on the field without any difficulty. Did any one tell you to search the fields, or did you do it on your own account?"

"Dmitry Alexandrovitch ordered me."

"Indeed! And you serve in his house! Oh! I understand, the ball was found at a very convenient moment."

The following witness was the waiter of the post-house, Makard. He could never keep anything in his head for more than a few hours, had forgotten all about the evening of the attempt, pretended to have seen Gondsevsky's gun lying on his bed the whole day, and when the attorney-general's assistant put him in mind of having deposed in quite another way a few weeks ago, he remained stubbornly silent, and it was impossible to get another word out of him.

Akime was now called in. He declared, to the astonishment of every one present, that Gondsevsky had behaved in a very modest and quiet way as long as he stayed at the post-house, and had never uttered any threats against Dmitry. As for the day on which "this trick was played"—thus he spoke of the

attempt at murder—he was perfectly unable to say whether he had been at home or not. "When Dmitry Alexandrovitch ordered me to send a man on horseback to summon help for arresting Mr. Gondsevsky, I refused. How could I do such a thing? He is a quiet sort of gentleman, who never thought of hurting any one; and besides, I knew it was against the law." All this was recited like a lesson learnt by heart. The fact was, that he hated Dmitry for having interfered with his money-lending business.

"Please to tell me where the accused was when Mr. Koretzky came to the post-house?" asked the attorney-general's assistant.

"I don't know, your excellency. He had left the house four hours before. It was late; the whole house was asleep——"

"Had he his gun with him went he went out?"

"Really, I don't know."

These words created a great impression. The jury looked excited, except the two members who were slumbering peacefully.

"It will be necessary to confront the witness with Mr. Koretzky," said the attorney-general's assistant.

Dmitry, however, had already left; after his deposition, he had asked for permission to withdraw.

"Mr. Koretzky has thought fit to disappear!" hissed the lawyer.

The assistant of the attorney-general asked that the previous deposition of Akime should be read, but

Sabolduk protested against this, and the judges did not know what to say.

"It is time for luncheon; is it not?" whispered the president to the man on his right side. "Won't you smoke a cigarette?" he asked of his left neighbour. "The jury is going to withdraw," he continued, in a loud voice, "in order to take a resolution. I notify an interval of a quarter of an hour."

As soon as the jury had left the room, loud talking resounded on all sides. The young men began to court the ladies; Sabolduk mingled with the crowd, and drew the general attention upon himself; even the constable did his best to make himself conspicuous. None but the accused remained at his place, along with the objects serving as convincing proofs.

"Your client will be condemned, I suppose?" said Mme. Bondareff to the lawyer.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Who knows? If all the members of the jury were really intelligent people, I could answer for him, I think. But these six peasants——"

"Do you want some lunch?" asked Bielhoff of Clementina.

"Oh, no, thank you." And a heavenly smile lit up her beautiful eyes. "Mais au reste, il fait si chaud," she continued, looking about her. Bielhoff offered his arm, but she was looking round for the vice-governor, who, in spite of the indignation of his wife,

fulfilled his duty, and led her to the sideboard like a true knight, though with some trepidation in his heart.

"People say that this Gondsevsky is no common murderer," continued Mme. Bondareff.

"But you entirely forget that he is perfectly innocent," Sabolduk answered, with a laugh.

"The person of the accused is of no consequence here," said the correspondent; "the whole question is, how to break the neck of such an independent landlord as this Dmitry Alexandrovitch seems to be. The whole affair arose from Gondsevsky siding with the peasants, and——"

"I heard something about an agreement having been torn to pieces," observed Sukho-Derevsky, joining the little group.

Loud clamours arose; and they all decided the best thing to do would be to condemn, not Gondsevsky, but Dmitry, as a dangerous aristocrat.

"The jury are returning," was announced by the constable.

A new row of witnesses was produced to confirm the threats uttered by the culprit in the post-house. Christopher Karlovitch talked in a particularly clear and firm way. The motives which had prompted Gondsevsky were beginning to become visible, but Sabolduk knew how to turn this to his client's advantage. He had not yet mentioned these motives, but he now resolved to blacken Dmitry, and to show him

in such a light that an attempt against his life would not seem such a very great crime, after all. He knew that a justice court is somewhat like a woman: it is not so much the guilt of the culprit which weighs with them, as the degree of sympathy which the victim inspires.

Therefore, when two of the peasants mentioned the quarrel between Dmitry and the steward, Sabolduk represented it as the deadly offence of a rich landed-proprietor towards an humble, honest man, striving hard to earn his daily bread. He did his best to show how devoid of sense was the broken Russian of Christopher Karlovitch, and tried, but vainly, to involve him in contradictions. As this did not succeed, he had recourse to other ways.

"Had you been long without a place before getting that at Nikolsky?" he asked.

"Eight months."

"You were very glad to get this situation?"

"Yes; it is a good one."

"Well," said Sabolduk, with a sneer, "so I suppose you are very grateful to Dmitry Alexandrovitch, and quite ready to do him a service?"

This observation seemed very harmless, yet it produced an expression of anger on the German's honest face. But the great triumph of Sabolduk began when the agreement about the wood was discussed. Here he tried to blacken Dmitry's character as much as possible, not caring whether he showed his client's

guilt in too strong a light, knowing that if he succeeded in representing Dmitry as the oppressor of the peasants, he would gain those who were members of the jury. The witness readily swallowed the bait, and admitted that the agreement about the wood had already been signed when Koretzky tore it up.

Here Gondsevsky asked permission to tell the facts himself.

"I always looked after the interests of the peasants, and prevented them from being oppressed by the landed proprietor," he said, in a trembling voice; "and when I succeeded in gaining this wood, which almost seems indispensable to their welfare ——" He stopped, as if overwhelmed with emotion.

The president did not think of putting a stop to this distorting of the facts.

"It seems that we are not here to judge Gondsevsky, but Mr. Koretzky," whispered the vice-governor to Sukho Derevsky, who was sitting near him."

"So it seems, indeed." The vice-governor again smiled and then sighed.

The witnesses in favour of the accused were now called in. Two peasants and a very pretty maid affirmed that the steward Gondsevsky was the very personification of honour and disinterestedness. The maid, while saying this, was blushing and winking at he president. Then came a gentleman, something

between a literary man and an attorney, who had once sat on the same school bench as the accused. He had happened to pass through town just now, and praised Gondsevsky as a very clever, most charming young man. He was succeeded by two Jews, Moses Natanson and Taukel Brilliant, who told some touching anecdote about his past. In a word, it was proved that if Gondsevsky was not perfectly guileless, he was at least a charming young man, belonging to the best of the present liberal party.

The assistant of the attorney-general now rose. He took up the business from afar of.

"There are cases," he began, "in which one recognises the existence of a mighty though corrupted will, of strong, psychological motives and overpowering passions. Such cases interest us a great deal; but here we find nothing of the sort. We see here a mean, yea, a paltry character and a hideous crime, so openly committed that it is needless to prove it, while we are vainly looking for a somewhat plausible motive for it. We do not even see the link between the deed and the character of the culprit, and are at a perfect loss to understand why he raised his hand to this bloody deed. Yet it is not so. If we look deeper into the heart of this man, we find the mysterious thread which unites his act to his motives. The end of this thread—I confess it willingly—does not lie within the culprit's heart, but much above his understanding. And therefore, gentlemen of the

justice court and jury, I invite you to look deeper and more intently into this business, and to consider it in the light of a social evil. Then it will not be the person of this Mr. Gondsevsky that will rise before you, but a whole society and all the evils which root so deeply in it, and which we are called upon to punish here."

He stopped, glanced at the crowd round him, and drank a little water out of the glass beside him. They all listened breathlessly, though no one, least of all the members of the jury, understood what he meant. Sabolduk was taking notes on a paper before him.

"I have been saying that the fact was as obvious as daylight," again began Soboriansky; "it is therefore not so much my business to state this to you as to lift the veil which the defender has thought fit to weave round his client."

And with a delicate raillery he pointed to the way in which Sabolduk had induced the witnesses to contradict themselves.

"I perfectly agree with the argument he used in favour of his client. I grant him his witnesses in the person of the two honourable Jews, even the pretty maid—here suppressed laughter was audible—bashfully defending his honour. All this does not invalidate the accusation. But let us now look at the facts themselves."

Soboriansky, however, did not dwell long on these

facts. He almost slurred them over somewhat contemptuously, hurrying on to a subject worthier of his eloquence. He only hinted at the motives which had led to Gondsevsky's being discharged by Dmitry, at the threats uttered at the post-house, and at all the other small details. His speech was as clear and rounded as possible. All the arguments of his opponent seemed to be crushed beforehand.

"Here is a man convicted of dishonesty, who might have been sent to prison, but whose crimes are generously forgiven, and this man resolves to commit a murder because he has lost his place. . . . How utterly impossible this seems! Yes, if we did not know the hidden motives, we could not believe in the truth of this assertion. But where is the key to these seeming contradictions?"

He now began to analyse the type of those people whose representative he saw in Gondsevsky, described the moral degradation which they reached, unsustained as they were by any principles, and even hinted at the influence which his nationality might have had on him.

"Strange to say," he exclaimed, "we who know the enchanting type of the Polish lady, this incarnation of all Southern graces,"—these last words were directed towards Clementina Adamovna, who looked down,—"we must still confess that we often find among Polish men an unconceivable mixture of insolent, sometimes criminal, audacity and low cunning."

Clementina, thinking of her husband, sighed deeply.

"But I won't stop at these outward things. The guilt lies deeper—it roots in our whole society; yes, in our Russian society. When fresh and running waters are transformed into stagnant pools, they are quickly covered with mould; when the human organism is decomposed and rotten, it becomes a carrion. In society such mould and carrions are called Gondsevsky."

Some faint applause was heard. Society likes to be called rotten.

"But it is not only Gondsevsky whom you judge—you condemn at the same time all his confederates; you give your help to purify the stagnant waters; you stop the progress of decomposition, and disperse the gathering miasmas."

The jury applauded, and the public looked very pleased. The vice-governor even turned to Besvidoff, saying,—

"He talks very well; don't you think so?"

"He has been pleading for the acquittal of the accused, I rather think."

The vice-governor gazed at him with a puzzled air.

Sabolduk did not begin his speech as fluently as his opponent: he hesitated, repeated several words, and struck the table with his fist. But by-and-by his words broke through all restraints, as the river throws off the winter ice, and the whole speech grew broader,

stronger, and swifter. Here are a few fragments of it, as they were reproduced by the papers.

"Sirs and gentlemen, a difficult task is before me. I must—— I am afraid of hurting your prejudices; this is a trial to me, for I have—— I do not possess such a gift of eloquence as the honourable gentleman who spoke before me. I should not dare to hope for an ultimate success, if I had not the conviction that truth always finds an echo in the hearts of such true gentlemen as you all are."

The public found him much inferior to the attorney-general's assistant.

"What is he munching there?" said Sukho Derevsky.

"He is not himself to-day," whispered Besvidoff to Madame Bondareff.

"I, for instance," continued Sabolduk, "I look upon this business from the same standpoint as my opponent. Yes; we are not here to judge *one* criminal: our whole society is interested in this affair. There are often cases in which the guilt of a single man is evident to everybody, while this so-called guilty man is, in reality, the victim of his own cause, a cause for which people perish, leaving behind them an honourable name."

"Confused, very confused, indeed," said the vice-governor, shaking his head.

The lawyer now left the misty realm of hints

behind him, and set about sketching the character of those people who perish victims of their own cause, and he allowed himself to go so far in their apotheosis that the president was obliged to stop him.

He crossed his hands on his breast, and was silent.

"I only meant to say that some of those sitting on the accused bench carry on their shoulders the weight of the sins of a whole society—the sins of egotism and interest——"

The president again interfered. The lawyer bent forward, leant with both hands on the table, and went on in a quick, low voice,—

"But let us get on to facts. The landed-proprietor Koretzky and his brother, passing along the high-road, heard something whistle past their ear from behind the trees of the hollow, and immediately fancied the shot had been fired at them, though the ball did not even graze the horse's head. Mr. Koretzky hurried on to the post-house, surrounded himself with a body-guard, and when the unsuspecting Gondsevsky returned home, they pounced on him, tied his hands and feet, and had him put into prison. How could such a thing happen? Are we living in Persia or Khiva, or in a large empire where the monarch's law protects the least of its inhabitants? . . . But Gondsevsky had a double-barrelled gun in his hand, you will say; one of the barrels was empty, and the cartridge, which was afterwards found in his room, fitted exactly his gun, and the ball belonging to it was found

the next day near the highroad. Are these proofs conclusive, I ask of you? Is a man to be punished because he possesses a gun and keeps cartridges in his room? I won't turn your attention to the starost Philip, who found the ball on the following morning; you have seen yourself what confidence can be put in this man. But I go further than this: I affirm that the whole thing is a lie! You heard the deposition of the witness Akime. Well, he is a man who would never swerve from the path of truth; while the other witnesses are people devoted to Mr. Koretzky, or dependent upon him. But enough of this. Let me only put one more question to you: how can you accuse Gondsevsky of murder when no one, not even Mr. Koretzky, saw any one in the hollow?"

The lawyer now sketched Gondsevsky's youth, his struggle with life, his honourable attempts to fulfil his duties as steward at Nikolsky, and then turned the whole weight of his eloquence upon Dmitry.

"A rich gentleman from Petersburg, weary of the idleness of the great world, settles in the country, and in order to fill up his leisure time takes the management of a neighbouring estate into his hands. But how could you expect a man accustomed to the high life in the capital to understand anything of rural affairs? He soon began to quarrel with the steward,—no wonder. The arrangement about the wood, which the latter had made with the peasants, was set at nought by him. I find no censure too strong for this pro-

ceeding. How is it possible to do such a thing in the enlightened days of the nineteenth century? This struggle is the struggle of nobility against liberty and intelligence. Yes, gentlemen, here is the key of the case! On one side the nobleman, on whose land the peasant hungers; on the other, the poor labourer, risen out of the ranks of the people, bereft of his honour, cast into the dock . . . What do I say?—bereft of their honour? Oh, no, they are not dishonoured, these poor champions for right, ever ready to give their last kopeck * to their poor neighbours. Now, choose between them, pronounce your verdict. Mankind is not standing still, but progressing onwards; the hour will soon strike that sweeps away the privileges of that small class which feeds upon the great masses. In our empire the right of the peasant to the land is acknowledged by the law; but when the day of full liberty will dawn, when the whole land will belong to those who cultivate it, then your just verdict of to-day will be acknowledged by posterity; it will have been the first step to the overthrow of the present order of things!"

These last words were spoken so loud that they prevented the president's bell from being heard. Thundering applause followed. Even the wife of the vice-governor joined, somewhat reluctantly, in this demonstration. As soon as silence was restored, the president summed up the whole question in a dry

* A Russian coin, $\frac{1}{100}$ part of a rouble.

business-like tone, asking the jury to condemn or acquit the criminal, according to the facts stated to them. Two questions were to be answered :—

Firstly : "Had there been an attempt at murder on Mr. Koretzky on the 15th of July, while he was returning from Nikolsky to Biälostolby ?"

Secondly : "If so, was Gondsevsky guilty of it ?"

The jury withdrew for half an hour. It would have been impossible to say that the verdict was expected with great anxiety. Curiosity was the most predominating feeling. Gondsevsky interested nobody.

They had wanted to hear moving speeches, and now only thought of getting home for dinner.

The starshina * read the verdict aloud. The first question had been answered affirmatively; the second, as to Gondsevsky's guilt, in the negative.

Some faint attempts at applause, and a great deal of loud laughter, were audible among the audience.

"I should like to kiss you!" exclaimed the lawyer, addressing Madame Brosoffsky.

The president announced the verdict to Gondsevsky amidst general inattention. Everybody had forgotten all about him, above all, his own defender.

* The magistrate of the parish.

CHAPTER IV

DMITRY was perfectly indifferent to the issue of the lawsuit. Other thoughts filled his mind. He had just received a telegram from Nadia, announcing her arrival at O——, and Anna Grigorievna was beginning to rally; so he felt rather light-hearted as he set out on a walk at eight o'clock in the evening. A clear, autumnal evening had unexpectedly succeeded to the grey, misty day. Dmitry entered the public garden, which stretched along the border of the Volga. He had hardly gone a few steps before he met the governor. The greeting over, his excellency took hold of his arm.

"Very glad to see you again. How is Anna Grigorievna?"

They sat down under an acacia tree, which had not yet lost its leaves.

"I must give you a lecture," said the governor kindly. "Why did you go to law about this stupid business? Nicholas Ossipovitch told you so, I know. You see he was right. What is to be done with such a jury, such lawyers?"

Dmitry was silent. The twilight did not allow the governor to see the smile which played round his mouth.

"I regret you did not listen to him. I should have looked upon it as a very great personal favour."

"Why so?"

"The scandal of to-day would not have taken place. Where there is no temptation there is no sin. Politics consist in avoiding opportunities. The affair of to-day is very disagreeable, both to you and to me."

"Don't trouble about me. I have forgotten Gondsevsky and his miserable attempt long ago. But what did you want me to do?"

The governor wiped his brow, as if the heat of this September night was too much for him.

"If you had come directly to me, instead of going to law, I should have had Gondsevsky removed."

"And what prevents your doing so now, if you deem it necessary?"

"Now? But it is quite impossible. Gondsevsky has become a celebrated man. If I were to make him disappear, you would soon see the result of that measure. The papers will now be singing his praises, especially the *Nishnevolski Courier*, in which Besvidoff has a part."

"But this paper appears under your censorship, does it not?" asked Dmitry, laughing."

"So it does; and I am very happy thus to be

able to remove all that is obnoxious to government in it."

"That is, in other words, it would be impossible to remove an inspector, though he were a rogue; but socialism can be preached, because it does not interfere with the comfort of any official person. Well, strange fruits of your system, to say the least!"

Dmitry shook hands with the governor and withdrew, but the latter remained some time longer where he was, striking the soil with his stick. Dmitry's words had touched him to the quick.

"Here is a rich landed-proprietor," he thought, "a conservative, as people say, but in reality a man ruled by the spirit of opposition. A nice thing, indeed, if we were to give those people the right of saying what they think of official persons!"

And the governor decided that the management of a province was rather a troublesome affair.

On the following day, the district Sobranie was opened in the town of C——. Ukhoff received his guests with open arms, but, in spite of his overwhelming courtesy, it was easy to see how restless he was. He knew that public opinion was against him, and trembled lest he should not be re-elected. When Dmitry arrived, he thought fit to press his hand, though he had just congratulated Sabolduk on the issue of the lawsuit. The general conversation turned upon this topic, but it would have been impossible to say that public opinion was in favour of Dmitry. When

he passed through the hall, everybody ceased speaking, and he experienced the same icy impression, as if a sudden current of cold air had touched him. But he did not mind. He knew very well that slander is like a furious dog—if you look straight into his eyes, he will quiet down and allow you to caress him. He did this, and shook hands with all those who were in his vicinity. Only when Saboldukapproached him with outstretched hands he turned his back upon him.

The first day of the session passed quietly and smoothly. In the evening Dmitry got a letter from Nadia. The young girl was beginning to doubt the success of her undertaking. She had not yet been able to see Boroffsky, and had not succeeded in unravelling one thread of the net in which her sister was caught. Yet she would not give way to depression.

"It is very hard for me to be obliged to write this to you, Dmitry," she wrote, "but I don't think I shall be able to return as quickly as I thought. You were perfectly right; everything is so much more difficult than I imagined. But I beseech you, don't allow yourself to be cast down. I'll stay here for two or three days longer, and if I don't succeed in seeing Sacha, I'll return to you. Don't be anxious about me; I am staying in my father's house, though he is not here. I don't think he will mind. The maid tells me he left for Kieff without knowing what has

happened to Sacha. He is expected back on the day after to-morrow. I should like to see him before I go away. This you will understand. Expect me on Tuesday or Wednesday. I got your letter, and thank you for it. How glad I am to know that poor mamma is better. I beg you once more not to be too anxious about me."

But this request was not easy to fulfil: Dmitry's conscience upbraided him earnestly for having allowed her to go; for one moment he thought of going himself to O——, and bringing her back with him. But he gave up this idea, as he might miss her on the way. An awful feeling of helplessness, along with a nameless dread, filled his heart; however much he fought against it, he could not conquer it. He went directly to the station, and sent her a message, telling her to return at once. But even as the wire carried off his ardent wish, he felt his heart sink within him, as if this fatal journey of hers was to lead to some unknown catastrophe.

On the second day of the session Dmitry made the proposal that the Sobranie might deliberate on the foundation of a rural society for mutual credit, adding that it was not the smallness of the peasants' lots which ruined them, as people pretended, but the high percentage they were obliged to pay to usurers. This proposal met with general opposition. Those peasants who lived upon money traffic were of course against it, while the whole Liberal party

refused to support it, because Dmitry had spoken against the smallness of the peasants' lots.

That same evening in the club Ukhoff told the gendarme colonel and Amfili Nikandrovitch, with whom he had just sat down to a game of whist, of the incredible proposition which Dmitry had made in the Sobranie.

"You see what a spirit pervades those so-called Conservatives," he said, dealing the cards; "he has already founded such a bank on his estate. Yesterday evening I had a visit from a peasant, a very plain man, Akime of the post-house; I think you know him?"

The ispravnik nodded affirmatively.

"He mentioned what passed at the lawsuit, and said, 'But this is pure socialism.' Is it not wonderful what tact those plain people have?"

"Well, I think we can congratulate you, Arkadie Stepanovitch," said the ispravnik; "you will be elected marshal of noblesse once more, I daresay."

"Who knows, who knows?" said Ukhoff triumphantly and mysteriously, at the same time glancing solemnly at the others.

This communication about Dmitry's doings robbed the colonel of his night's rest; and on the following morning he repaired as early as possible to the governor.

"Any news, Anton Denisovitch?" asked the latter on seeing him.

"Yes; about this Mr. Koretzky. I often told you that he was a dangerous man, and now, after what happened in the last sitting of the Sobranie, your excellency must confess that I was right. You will see yourself in the record that he proposed the erection of some rural money bank to the profit of the peasants. Is this not a revolutionary idea?"

The governor straightened his neckcloth with his left hand and coughed.

"I don't think there is anything in this motion to make us very uneasy," he said.

"Well, but don't you know that he is going to marry that girl Olsheffsky, who is now living with his mother, but who was formerly under the notice of the police?" said the colonel, bending somewhat forwards, in a mysterious whisper.

The governor started.

"You never believed what I told you about this girl being closely connected with all the chiefs of the revolutionary party. At this moment doubt is no longer possible. You read, I suppose, the copy of the letter which her brother-in-law, Prince Toumanoff, wrote to her on the day of his wife's arrest? We know positively that she left immediately for O——, as soon as she received this letter."

"Indeed! Well, this alters the face of the question, certainly."

"I therefore intend to issue a warrant to have Biälastolby searched."

"The house of Anna Grigorievna! Impossible!" exclaimed the governor, aghast.

"I beg your pardon, your excellency, but this is the only way of discovering anything. Who knows with whom she has been corresponding? We may discover papers of the greatest value in her drawers."

This was very unpleasant news to the governor. He, the general favourite of ladies, was to allow a young and lovely girl to be molested, and that in the house of his old friend, Anna Grigorievna! Besides, the arguments of the colonel were obnoxious to him.

"Moreover," continued Anton Denisovitch, "we might in this way gain some insight into Dmitry Alexandrovitch's affairs. I can't understand that he, with his Conservative ideas, as you call them, is going to marry a young Nihilist girl; it looks odd, to say the least."

"But promise me to do this as delicately as possible," said the governor, at last; "tell the policeman that he will have to deal with ladies."

"Of course, your excellency; our agents are all very well bred, if I am allowed to say so."

"Well, then, I appoint Amfili Nikandrovitch to be my representative. He is a great friend of Anna Grigorievna, and will do his best, I daresay, to soften whatever may be hard in this measure."

The governor was no friend of severe measures, but, on the other hand, he hated worry, and had had

nothing but conflicts since Dmitry had settled in the province.

The following day was the last one of the Zemstvo. Nothing remained to be done but to elect the marshal of noblesse, and then return home. Ukhoff was in a triumphant mood. He had refused to be balloted, and now, trusting that no other candidate would get the necessary votes, he intended to consent, out of pure condescension, to become marshal of noblesse for another year. But an unexpected surprise awaited him.

"Gentlemen," said Dmitry, suddenly, "we are going to ask Feodor Vassilievitch Tomiline to stand as a candidate."

Already, before the sitting, he had been negotiating with Tomiline and the chief members of the peasantry.

"I know that it is a hard, disagreeable task," Dmitry had said to him, "but remember that in your hands, and in yours only, the affairs of our Zemstvo will get on well and honourably."

Tomiline gave way, though reluctantly. His unexpected candidature met with general sympathy, and Ukhoff understood that things were hopeless for him. Tomiline got thirty ayes, and with this majority all further struggle was ended.

At six o'clock the elections were over, and Dmitry resolved to return home at once. As he was leaving the house, he saw a tarantass stopping close to him. Volodia jumped out of it, looking highly excited.

"What's the matter?" cried the elder brother, aghast. "How is mamma?"

"Very well, indeed; but something has happened."

"Come along; we can't talk here, before all these people."

And leading the way into a by-street, always empty at this hour of the day, he listened silently to Volodia's report. A policeman had come to make a search at Biälastolby. The colonel had lost no time, indeed.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Dmitry. "Come, let us go to the governor, and tell him all. He can't have given this order himself."

The brothers sat down in the tarantass and drove off to the governor's mansion.

"To-day at twelve o'clock we saw a carriage dash up to the entrance door," Volodia went on; "out of it jumped the ispravnik, and after him an officer of the police. The former turned immediately to me—I happened to be standing on the stairs—asking after mamma's health with his loathsome smile. 'I am here on business,' he said; 'allow me to introduce you to the staff-captain Malinoffsky.' I looked from the one to the other, and even held out my hand to this Malinoffsky.

"'We have some business here,' repeated the ispravnik, 'and, as you know, business is not always pleasant. Ha, ha, ha!' He dared to laugh, the fool! They then explained that they had a war-

rant to make a search in the house, and, above all, in the rooms of Nadia."

"What! a search in Nadia's rooms! Did you consent to it?"

"They made their request in the name of the law. I hesitated a little, I confess, and then gave them the key to her room."

Dmitry uttered a cry of indignation.

"They searched her writing-table very carefully, but did not find anything. The ispravnik wanted to look into her drawers also, but this Malinoffsky would not allow. After this they asked to be taken to your room, but I stopped them.

"'What!' I cried, 'you dare to suspect my brother!'"

"Never mind!" cried Dmitry impatiently; "let them search my rooms as much as they like. But, the wretches, they dared to search Nadia's rooms!"

"They searched even the laboratory, and inquired very eagerly after foreign books. 'Are they prohibited?' I asked. 'No, not exactly,' he answered; 'still——' At last they hit upon Auguste Comte's works. 'These are certainly prohibited,' he said; 'and however much I regret it, I shall be obliged to take them away with me.'"

"The wretch!" hissed Dmitry.

"They never looked into my room, though I daresay they would have found lots of prohibited books there, like Lassalle, and others. They were looking about them with a very dissatisfied air, when all of a

sudden I saw mamma coming towards us, but mamma as she was of old, with all her former dignity of self-possession. She never glanced at the police officer, but addressing the ispravnik, she said,—'You have dared to search my house! But you don't know with whom you have to deal! What do I care for your governor? I'll go straight to the minister with my complaint.'"

The carriage stopped before the governor's mansion. He was not at home, having gone to the cathedral for evening service, said the porter. The fact was that he spent the evening with Clementina Adamovna, at whose house he was a frequent guest.

Dmitry ordered the coachman to drive back to Biälastolby. He found his mother in a white heat of indignation. The old lady seemed transformed; she would not submit quietly to the offence done to her. Her eyes flashed, her voice sounded broken and indignant. Dmitry looked very anxious.

"Don't be uneasy about me," she said to her son; "I have forgotten all about my illness. But they shan't insult *me*, nor my Biälastolby!"

On Sunday morning came a letter from Nadia, just as sad as the first one. She had at last seen her sister, but this meeting had left on her a very mournful impression. She repeated once more that she would be back on Tuesday.

"Why does she not come earlier?" thought Dmitry.

The whole letter left him a feeling of dissatisfaction; it was as if she was hiding something from him; and the two days till her return dragged slowly and sadly on. In the meantime he tried to see the governor once more, but met again with a rebuke. Orders had been given not to admit him.

"Leave this business to me," said his mother, on his return from town after his fruitless drive; "you don't know how to treat these official persons. He'll answer me, I tell you."

And, in fact, the letter which she wrote him was answered on the following day. His excellency regretted very much all that had happened, and wrote in a tender, non-official tone, promising that this proceeding would have no consequences at all.

"No consequences!" she exclaimed indignantly; "he'll see what consequences it will have for him! Do you think I am to be fed on such promises as these?"

Tuesday came. Dmitry and Volodia drove together to the station to receive Nadia. Their mother remained at home, expecting their arrival with great anxiety. But Nadia did not come, neither with the morning nor with the evening train. Dmitry trembled at the thought of what might have befallen her. He hurried to the telegraph station, and sent a despatch to O——. The whole night was spent by him in an agony of expectation. At seven o'clock in the morning the telegram was returned to him, no per-

son of that name living at O——. He doubted no longer that some great misfortune had befallen her. He returned to Biälastolby, and told the whole truth to his mother, adding that he was going to start for O—— that very night. Anna Grigorievna felt entirely crushed at this revelation.

"And you allowed her to go!" she cried, "allowed her to return to her old associates! Who knows whom she met there, with whom she is now staying?"

But this was no time for reproaches, and the old lady understood it. Slowly did the hours of this awful day drag on. Two telegrams had been sent off to Aniussa, to order her to send some news of her young mistress. The evening came. Suddenly a horse's hoofs resounded on the gravel before the entrance. It was the messenger who had been sent to town for letters. He brought one from Aniussa. Dmitry seized it, tore it open, but he had hardly read the first lines before his trembling hands dropped it on the floor.

CHAPTER V.

ON her arrival at O——, Nadia went at first to an hotel. But the wish to see her father once more awoke in her heart when she found herself in her native town, amid all her well-known surroundings. Her young, newly-found happiness made her forget all his misdeeds, and washed out, so to say, her past cares. So she walked down to his house early the next morning. But she found it empty. Its only inhabitants consisted of an old cook, who had lived many years in the family, and a dog, who began to bark most furiously as Nadia entered the courtyard. The young girl had to wait long before the cook came to open the door to her.

"My goodness, our young lady!" she cried joyously, on recognising her. "I did not expect you, to be sure. How glad your father will be to see you!"

She was now told that her father had gone to Kieff on business, and was expected back in a very short time.

"You must stay with us, miss. Is our house not better than an hotel? Oh, how glad your father will be!"

Nadia sent for her trunks, and settled down in her old home. Her long-forgotten love for her father and her home again awoke in her heart as she walked about the empty rooms. They looked sad and dark to her, though the bright rays of a southern sun were pouring through the open windows. They had a look of decay about them, and Nadia wondered whether their proprietor had felt the hand of time as heavily during these eighteen months of her absence.

"You would hardly know your father again," said the cook, as if guessing her thoughts; "he is quite grey and broken-hearted."

Nadia did not dare to inquire after Sacha, but the garrulous old woman told her, unasked, all that she wanted to know. Her sister had quarrelled with her father, and left him six months ago, and it may be that her absence had contributed to the decay of the house. The cook knew nothing about her arrest.

"My goodness!" she exclaimed, on hearing it; "our poor young lady! What do I say?—our princess! To arrest her, to shut her up in a prison!"

Nadia tried to learn from her where the prison was, but the old woman did not know anything, so they sent for the ostler, who knew the whole neighbourhood very well, and was perfectly able to give her the information she wanted.

At twelve o'clock she drove down to the prison.

It was a huge building, and she had a great deal of trouble before she discovered the reception-room of Boroffsky. When she asked for him, people gazed at her with a sort of wondering pity. What could such a pretty young girl have to do with the great man? At the door of the reception-room she was stopped by the guard.

"Whom do you want?"

"Nicholas Ossipovitch Boroffsky."

"His excellency is occupied. You must wait here."

She sat down near the window.

Three men were writing in the room. They gazed continually at her, laughing and tossing their heads at her. Half an hour passed. Several persons entered the room, banging loudly the door after them, but Boroffsky did not appear. Nadia at last got up, and crossing over to the secretary, said,—

"Please tell me when it will be possible to see Nicholas Ossipovitch Boroffsky."

"He is not in just now; please to sit down again."

She was turning away, when he stopped her.

"Why do you want to see him?" he asked, with an equivocal smile.

"I have some business to transact with him," she answered simply, without the slightest idea of what he meant.

"Business; oh! some request, I suppose?"

"Yes; some request."

The secretary again smiled, gazing steadfastly at her.

"I don't know when he will return, perhaps not for a long while," he said suddenly, and sitting down again, began to write very quickly; but Nadia had hardly turned away before he glanced at his two companions, and they smiled again.

Two long hours passed wearily, and Nadia resolved at last to go away and return on the following day. Thence she went to the chief of the police, to try and learn something about her sister. But here she did not fare any better. On her asking where the prisoners were put, the three policemen who heard her question gazed at her in rather an unfriendly way.

"Why do you want to see the prisoners?" asked one of them, somewhat roughly.

"I want to see a relation of mine."

"You won't be admitted, unless by special license."

Nadia tried to insist, and asked whether Princess Toumanoff was shut up here. On hearing this name, they glanced significantly at each other.

"In plain Russian then," said one of them, "we shan't let any one in."

She then asked to be allowed to see the chief himself, but he never saw any one after eleven o'clock. This answer provoked a great deal of mirth among the persons who filled the room.

In the evening Nadia wrote her first letter to

Dmitry, in which she told him of her failure; afterwards she wrote a few words to Boroffsky, asking him to receive her on the following day, about twelve o'clock.

Boroffsky was seldom startled at anything, but Nadia's letter almost took away his breath. His short-lived acquaintance with the young girl seemed to have been broken off for ever, and now he was holding a note of hers in his hands! His heart beat tumultuously, and his fingers trembled so that he could hardly open it. His deeply wounded self-love had not killed this all-absorbing passion within him, after all!

When Neradovitch's letter to the young girl had been handed over to him by Elena, his first impulse had been to make use of it, to involve her in all the intricacies of a political accusation. But an inner voice warned him not to do it. It was not conscience's voice—Boroffsky was above such weakness, fit for those only who did not believe in their own strength. It was simply that he would have blushed at such a mean and cruel vengeance.

"I won't be the instrument of her ruin," he said contemptuously, guessing rightly at Elena's motives. But if he had looked deeper into his own heart, he would have found an immense pity for the girl, once so passionately loved. Yet he refrained from destroying the letter.

He answered her note immediately, saying he

would be at her service at the appointed hour. Having sealed it, he went out into the ante-room where Aniussa was waiting. He questioned her closely about the time of Nadia's arrival, wanting to know how long she intended to stay at O——, but only got very unsatisfactory answers, for Aniussa was very discreet. But on her return home she could not praise him enough.

"What a nice gentleman! and how many questions he asked about you, Nadeshda Sergeïevna!" she said.

Nadia felt very nervous about her projected visit. She always found it very difficult to ask a favour of any one, but how much more here, where she had so deeply offended the man in whose power it was to grant her this favour. An unconquerable feeling of awkwardness and shame overcame her as she entered the reception room where she had been waiting so long on the preceding day. This time the secretary started up, almost excusing himself, and hurried into Boroffsky's private office. Two minutes had hardly passed before he appeared himself. His face had his usual cold and official expression. He asked her to enter his room, and preceded her into it; but as soon as he was left alone with her, his face changed, and the official mask was dropped. His violent agitation betrayed itself in the tone of his voice and in the nervousness of his movement as he drew a chair for her near to the writing-table.

"How can I be useful to you, Nadeshda Ser-

gefevna?" he said, in a choked voice; "I should be delighted if I could help you in any way."

The trembling of his voice struck Nadia, and she quickly mastered her own emotion.

"Thank you; I shan't keep you long."

"I know that you are here alone, without your family," he interrupted her, not heeding her words.

"I am here with my maid ——."

"What! and your —— Dmitry Alexandrovitch did not accompany you?"

"His mother is very ill; he can't leave her."

The illness of Anna Grigorievna did not interest him at all; one single question whirled through his brain and burned in his eyes—— "How can Dmitry let her go, even for a day? What's a mother compared to her? If she was my bride —— "

"You don't ask why I came here."

"Forgive me, I ——" He could not go on.

Nadia told him all about her sister.

"Princess Toumanoff your sister!" he cried bewildered. "You want perhaps ——"

"I came here to intercede for her, and if I can't obtain her pardon, to try at least and see her."

"Intercede for her! but then you don't know what she has done?"

"I know nothing; I only want to save her."

"I regret very much to be obliged to rob you of this hope; it is perfectly impossible for me to do anything for her."

He did not tell her that he had been the cause of her arrest. Since the day of his arrival, affairs had been conducted in such an energetic and clever way, that he had made one important discovery after another, and arrested persons they had vainly been searching after for several months. Now he almost regretted his zeal, and would have been ready to sacrifice his whole official position for her sake.

"Allow me to give you good advice, Nadeshda Sergeïevna," he said. "You can't help your sister: I say it once more. But you can save yourself. Don't have any further intercourse with those—your former friends; it might harm you."

"My sister is in danger," Nadia flashed out, "and you want me to abandon her! But never mind me, Nicholas Ossipovitch. Tell me, I beg of you, what has my sister done? or is it a secret?"

"Princess Toumanoff was guilty of distributing tracts and papers among the workmen in the manufactory where she was living under a false name. Believe me, I should be happy if I saw the possibility of saving her. I am only pursuing the work itself, not individuals, and I know that she is but the tool in others' hands. I tell you once more, it is impossible to save her."

"But the less hope there is for her the more comfort she wants. She is separated from her own family, from the whole world. I only want to see her, that she may know she is not quite forgotten."

"Alas, Nadeshda Sergeïvna, a meeting under such circumstances is no comfort at all; it would only subject you to useless suspicions."

"Do you really think this fear would keep me back? Say rather that you refuse this interview."

"It is not so, Nadeshda Sergeïevna, but ——"

He rose, and there was a strange mixture of adoring love and fear for her in his eyes.

"Well, then, give me a paper of introduction for the prison where she is detained. I am told you can do this."

"You shall have it, but I do not hide from you that these meetings are usually reserved for the last moments——"

Nadia gave him a scornful look.

"Oh, if you are afraid, I'll take it to the chief of the police, that he may sign it. He at least won't be afraid."

These words did not wound Boroffsky. He hardly took in what she meant. The quiet resolution of her manner struck him. He loved her the more for it.

"Oh, Nadeshda Sergeïevna," he exclaimed warmly, "if you were the wife of a man as clever and brilliant as you are yourself, what would you not be able to fulfil! You are made to inspire people to do great things!"

The passionate look which accompanied these words frightened Nadia; her face became cold and rigid.

"Our conversation is at an end, Nicholas Ossipovitch," she said. "If you are willing to grant my request, please let me know what I have to do."

For some moments Boroffsky gazed earnestly at her. His lips trembled, and a wicked feeling rose within his breast. Her words hurt him the more as he knew how ardently he had allowed himself to be drawn towards her.

"I'll give you a written order, Nadeshda Sergeïevna," he said, "and this afternoon the police will be told about it."

He seized quickly a sheet of white paper, and his pen glided in feverish haste over it.

"If you show this, they will take you to your sister," he said, handing her the paper. "That is all I can do for you."

She thanked him, and walked quickly away. Boroffsky tried vainly to give himself up to his usual work. This all-absorbing feeling, which had suddenly risen from the dead, filled his heart and brain.

"Why must the only woman I ever loved on earth be beyond my reach?" he cried, wringing his hands.

The paper which he had given Nadia proved a great help to her when she entered the prison on the following day. It is true, the keepers looked wonderingly at her on hearing that she was a sister of Princess Toumanoff, yet they took her to the department where the prisoners were shut up. They passed a long corridor, with greasy felt carpets, where the

keepers were drinking brandy and soda at small wooden tables. A long row of whitewashed doors led into the prisoners' rooms. No. 7 was opened, and Nadia ushered into a low room, with a stone floor and greasy walls, lit up by a very small window, high up in the wall.

On the bed a young woman was sitting, with a book in her hand. She had a black dress on, with cuffs and collar, which gave a sort of dirty, indefinite tinge to her throat and wrists. The face had a sad, depressed look. There was not a drop of blood in her cheeks.

"Nadia!" she exclaimed, as her sister appeared in the door, and threw herself into her arms. They kissed each other tenderly; but then a strange spirit seemed to take possession of Sacha. She pushed Nadia away, as if ashamed of the tenderness she had shown her, exclaiming,—

"Why this, Nadia? Are we two schoolgirls to meet in this way? Well, I gave you one kiss; that's enough. Now tell me what you have been doing since I saw you last."

Nadia gazed sadly at the pale, thin face of her sister, who had been such a pretty girl, and who had now such a harsh, unnatural look.

"Well, I shan't trouble you long; our time is short." And she told her about Toumanoff's letter.

"Oh, so it was Levka who asked you to come hither? How stupid of him!"

The sharpness of her tone struck Nadia disagreeably.

"Don't talk thus, Sacha," she said reprovingly. "He is your husband, and you are bound to love him."

"I know. Well, he is a good fellow; but you don't fancy, I suppose——"

She gave a short laugh, but it sounded hollow, and a harsh expression hovered round her mouth.

"Well, you are here; thank you for coming." She gazed at Nadia with a strange, scoffing look. "I did not think you were uneasy about me."

Bitter tears filled Nadia's eyes. This meeting, which she had longed for so passionately, made a most dreadful impression upon her, quite independently of the position in which she had found her sister.

"Alas, Sacha, you do not know me at all," said Nadia, and her hand stole round her sister's waist. "My poor girl, if I did not pity you and try to comfort you, who should?"

"I don't want your pity," said Sacha angrily, "nor to be comforted by you. I am the cause of my own misfortune; so your pity is wasted on me. Do you see?"

The strained expression of her face deepened: she was evidently struggling to give herself this Spartan harshness. Nadia's heart was beating wildly. She remained for some moments buried in deep silence,

without even looking at her sister; then she began to question her about the way in which her arrest took place.

Sacha seemed to rally a little as this question was put to her. She began with detailing her underground existence, of which she seemed rather proud; then passing on to her arrest, she added,—

"I am not faring badly here: food is good, and I have all that I want. It may be a little damp, perhaps; but then it is no palace, of course. You can't understand this, white-handed, delicate lady as you are, willing to be married to a gentleman!"

Nadia was opening her lips, but meeting the cold, icy stare of her sister, she dared not utter the words that trembled on her tongue.

"The chief thing is that I have books and papers. I don't care very much for writing; but reading, reading——"

Nadia glanced at the large book lying on the bed. It was the Russian translation of the "Biology of Spenser."

"Are these books really of any help to you to conquer your grief?" she asked wonderingly, for she knew that Sacha had formerly detested this indigestible sort of clever writings.

"Do you want me to read books to save my immortal soul?" Sacha asked mockingly. But suddenly her artificial composure gave way, tears started into her eyes, and, hiding her face on her

younger sister's shoulder, she burst into a passionate storm of sobs. Nadia folded her in her embrace, stroked her hair, and tried to soothe her as a mother soothes a weeping child.

"Oh, Nadia, Nadia, I am so unhappy! Don't believe all I said. I am so glad that you came!"

Her voice was quenched by her tears. Nadia suddenly remembered the words she had heard in church, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And she tried to point out to her sister the road which led towards the Good Shepherd as the only one which could give her comfort.

"Cry as much as you can, darling; it will do you good. Do not harden your heart, as you did just now. Be of good cheer; punishment does not last for ever."

"What! do you want me to plead guilty?" cried Sacha, with a new burst of indignation. "Shall I ask the judges to forgive me?"

"If you are innocent, it will be easier for you to suffer, easier to submit in patience."

"What nonsense you are talking!" she cried; "as if I did not know that we are to be sent to the gallows, all of us, sooner or later. A great favour this, is it not?"

"No; that is no favour, darling. But if you know that no change whatever can take place in your life without Almighty God's holy will——"

"What awful nonsense! Are you not ashamed of talking thus to me?"

Sacha rose, wiped her tears, and placing both her hands on her sister's shoulder,—

"There is a Heaven and a justice in it, you fancy. Then why are you rich and happy, rich in your bridegroom's love, while I am going to die on the rack? Are you not just as guilty as I am? Remember the times when——"

Sacha's words found a ready echo in Nadia's own conscience. Yes; she had no right to be happier than her sister!

"I see," she said, after a short pause; "but if my life took a happy turn, why could yours not change also?"

Sacha sighed.

"That is impossible," she said. "No way leads back from prison to social happiness."

"Who knows? Perhaps something might be done for you. They say that those are forgiven who——"

"Repent," cried Sacha. "They are pointed at with fingers afterwards."

Yet it was easy to see that, in spite of her stoicism, hope began to revive within her.

"I am sorry, Nadia, very sorry; and then my husband is very good also—and papa, too, though I have not seen him for a long time. Does he know? No? So much the better. When he returns you will prepare him, won't you? And now I want you to

do something for me." Here her voice suddenly changed. "Will you consent to see my husband?"

"Why not?"

"It is no easy matter, and not without danger. He lives at Goldstein's lodgings, it seems. We had decided long ago to meet there if any danger threatened us. They both live under a feigned name. I know you will dislike seeing Goldstein again, for you were never friends; but you'll find other people there besides him: Varvara Pokrovsky, among others, called the Donkey; and then Bulldog. This was the nickname of Neradovitch.

Nadia frowned a little, but she was silent.

"Yes; our business was getting on when it was stopped," Sacha continued. "So you'll see my husband? Tell him—— no, it is better to write."

She took up a leaf of grey paper lying on the table, and scratched a few lines hastily on it.

"What, in ciphers!" said Nadia, as her sister handed her the paper. "No, thank you, my dear child, I will not deliver this."

"Not deliver it! because it might look like a breach of trust? How ridiculous!"

Nothing was to be done, however. Nadia did not give way, and Sacha was obliged to confide her plans to her. She had found means to correspond with her friends, with the help of a prisoner, whose acquaintance she had made during one of her walks in the courtyard. The keeper had undertaken to forward

the letter, a high reward having been promised to him, and nothing remained but to fix the means and the place of their correspondence.

"Perhaps you'll bring me their answer," continued Sacha. "But you can take a few words to my husband, only to show him that I am still alive."

She had hardly managed to scrawl a second note before the door was opened, and the keeper told Nadia she had already spent a whole hour in the prisoner's cell, instead of the allotted half-hour.

Nadia again embraced Sacha, though not so tenderly as the first time, and handing the keeper a silver ruble, she hurried out into the street. As she walked home, she thought of the awful change which had taken place in her sister's life, and Sacha's words, that she had not the right to be free and happy while she was suffering so dreadfully, resounded in her ears, and took the shape of a prophetic voice. They haunted her the whole day, wherever she went, whispering in her ears that no unlawful happiness can be lasting.

CHAPTER VI.

SACHA TOUMANOFF had given her sister the address of Goldstein. But it was no easy matter to discover his real abode, as he had already changed it twice. An unlawful life is always a roving one. The porter at his former lodgings gave her very confused directions; yet she went on with her search, almost against her will, for she knew it would delay her return to Biälastolby, and had besides a vague idea that Dmitry would not approve of her renewing her intercourse with her old associates. Therefore she did not mention in her letter to him why she prolonged her stay in the town of O——. She felt that she was not acting rightly, and that she might just as well have taken the letter in ciphers with her. But she was unable to refuse Sacha's request, for, according to her ideas, the relations between husband and wife stood above every other in life. Besides, she felt the whole time as if some wicked, irresistible power was dragging her on towards the place she most wished to avoid. An inward voice told her in mocking tones that she would never free herself from her old bonds, and that it was just as impossible to break

with one's past as to cross a large, flowing river on foot.

She spent two whole days in hunting up Goldstein's lodgings. On Friday evening she came at last upon the right track. He was living on the fourth floor in a large house, standing quite alone in the midst of smaller buildings, in a remote part of the town. She mounted a dark and dirty staircase. There was such loud talking in the room that the door-bell was not answered at once. At last some hushed steps were heard, and an unknown voice asked, "Who is there?"

"It is I, Nadeshda Olsheffsky," she answered.

The bolt was quickly withdrawn. The little bit of candle in the hand of the man who opened the door to her threw but a wavering light on his face, yet she recognised the yellow, lifeless features of her brother-in-law. He had changed his voice while talking through the door.

"We did not expect you, never guessed it could be you," he whispered, helping her to take off her wraps. "Did my letter really make you come?"

A certain distrust was audible in his voice. She bowed her head affirmatively.

"Please come in. You'll find other friends here."

In the small room, dimly lit up by an oil lamp, three men were sitting at a table before a hissing samovar. The tobacco smoke was something awful, though the window facing the court was open. The

whole furniture consisted of a leather couch and a few chairs. A young girl was sitting on the couch. Nadia had no difficulty in recognising Varvara in her. She had not grown prettier since she had parted with her in Moscow. Beside her our old friend Brushkoff was smoking a cigarette. Toumanoff held a short pipe in his hand, out of which a most filthy smoke was mounting towards the ceiling. The only one who did not smoke was Goldstein, who reclined lazily on the couch listening to Brushkoff.

"It is Nadia; what do you say to that?" exclaimed Toumanoff, as he ushered his sister-in-law into the room.

No one expressed the slightest astonishment. Varvara bent her head, muttering something about not having met for a long time. Brushkoff inquired whether her journey had been fatiguing or not, and Goldstein asked if he could give her a cup of tea.

She declined his offer.

"Well, just as you like; I was never very fond of entertaining. Please sit down."

And he pointed to the chair opposite to her. Toumanoff was the only one who seemed really glad to see her. When Brushkoff took up his conversation, as if nothing had happened in the interval, he stopped him, saying,—

"Wait a little. It will be more interesting to listen to her than to hear what you have got to say."

Brushkoff shrugged his shoulders.

"It is true," he said; "before strangers it is better to be careful."

"Tell us whether you succeeded in seeing Sacha," said Toumanoff, addressing Nadia.

"I saw her three days ago," answered the young girl, giving all the details of her interview.

Toumanoff listened eagerly, often interrupting her with his questions, while the others looked as if they did not care.

"So they allowed you to see her!" cried Varvara, with a sneer. "Only fancy what protection does!"

"Boroffsky is a great friend of hers," said Brushkoff mockingly. "Remember what I told you."

Nadia tried not to observe the open hostility of her surroundings. Obliged to confer with those people, she conquered her loathing of them; and the consciousness that she delivered the message entrusted to her against her will raised her so much above them that their offensive words made no impression on her.

"I have a message from my sister for you," she said, addressing herself exclusively to her brother-in-law. And she told him that Sacha had discovered a way of corresponding with him.

"What a darling she is, dear Sacha!" he cried. "Thank you so very much. And how is she to get my answer? Will you take it to her?"

"Yes; if you wish it very much."

"How nice!" cried Brushkoff; "and we should be

fools enough to entrust you with our answer, in order that you might betray us all!"

Toumanoff turned deadly pale on hearing this observation. He did not take in the whole meaning of Brushkoff's words, yet in his heart awoke a half-slumbering distrust of Nadia. The young girl started up, straightening her slender figure; her eyes were burning with indignation, every drop of blood had left her face.

"What do you mean?" she asked, turning towards Brushkoff.

"I say what I mean: that it is rather hard work to trust a messenger like you, Nadeshda Sergeïevna."

"True, perfectly true," exclaimed Varvara. "Your sister-in-law, Prince, is a spy; I have known her long, and do not wonder——"

Toumanoff was looking helplessly about him.

"How do you dare say such a thing, Varvara?" Nadia asked, almost under her breath. However exalted she felt herself over these people, yet this offence was too great; the mere idea of her being capable of such falseness stung her to the quick.

"Why do these words sting you, Nadeshda Sergeïevna?" Brushkoff went on. "In Biälastolby you betrayed us in the most shameful way: you were the cause of Vassili's arrest, and when Neradovitch appeared, you turned your back upon him. Here you have only to show yourself, and all doors are open to you. Our greatest enemy, Boroffsky, showers

favours upon you. And after this you want us to consider you in the light of a friend and ally!"

"No!" cried Nadia. "I never was an ally of yours, and shall never be after all I saw at Biälastolby. I won't have anything to do with you."

"Very sincere, at least," murmured Varvara.

Goldstein, who had hitherto been sitting silently in his corner, now rose, and approaching Nadia with blazing eyes, said,—

"What you said just now we knew long ago. But now it is only just that you hear our opinion about you. You withdrew from our work at the very moment when you were the most wanted, and now you return hither only to brave us, because you consider this work as lost. You think you can break with us unpunished, but know that this proceeding is shameful in the eyes of all honest people. You have deserved the contempt of all those whom you considered your confederates formerly.

"You forced yourself upon us, Nadia," said Varvara; "do you remember?"

"Why lose so many words on her?" cried Brushkoff; "much she cares for our esteem!"

Nadia glanced at Toumanoff. She hoped he would say at least one word in her defence, for he knew that she had undertaken this long journey at his request. But he only looked away as their eyes met.

"You side with them!" she cried indignantly; "well, then, know all of you that I only care for my

sister, and that if it had not been on her account, I should not have raised my little finger on your behalf."

She turned towards the door.

"Won't you wait for Neradovitch?" laughed Brushkoff behind her; "he will be here in a minute."

Toumanoff, as if changing his mind, hurried out after her, to accompany her downstairs; but she had already put on her hat, and was gone.

"We thank her, nevertheless," said Toumanoff, as he re-entered the sitting-room, "for we have now, at least, the means of corresponding with Sacha. Do you really suspect Nadia?"

"Of course not," answered Goldstein. "Still, I think we had better give up the correspondence through the keeper, rather than run into a mouse-trap."

"As for me, I look upon Nadia as a spy," observed Varvara. "I never loved her."

A quarrel now ensued, which would probably have lasted a long time if a bell had not resounded faintly.

"It is Bulldog," said Brushkoff. "Do not tell him that Nadia was here, or we shan't get a sensible word out of him."

It was in fact Neradovitch. He had grown very thin and old during the last months. Hurling his felt hat on to the window-sill, he sat down to the table, and began pouring out his tea.

"What a muddy beverage!" he said, gazing at the weak liquid, in which some tea-leaves were floating.

"Do you bring us any news?" asked Varvara.

"At least a solution. We must leave at once. Boroffsky has had two of ours arrested to-day. Most fortunately I have hit upon a new acquaintance, who may be of the greatest use to us. He is manager of a large manufactory. We shall be as safe with him as in Abraham's lap."

This proposal was received in deep silence.

"You don't seem to like this idea," he said, astonished at the way in which his news was greeted.

"It is not exactly that," answered Goldstein; "we only think it is all in vain."

Neradovitch was not accustomed to open revolt; he gazed at Goldstein, who seemed to be the leader of the opposition, and wondered what it meant.

"Yes, perfectly vain," repeated Goldstein. "The work does not progress, business is languishing, and we are not reaping any benefit from it."

"How often have I already heard these sayings from you!" answered Neradovitch, waving his hand.

"I am not alone in my opinion," said Goldstein; "ask the others. We all resolved long ago to give up the propaganda, as it leads to nothing."

"And take up again the peaceful occupations of honourable citizens," added Neradovitch, sneering.

"Not exactly. But we think the road which we are now treading dangerous and long, therefore we prefer a shorter one—and that consists in not drawing back before anything. Do you understand?"

"That is, you want to turn murderers," said Neradovitch contemptuously.

"We'll do to others what they do to us," cried Goldstein, starting up. "I did not think you were under any delusion as to the peaceful issue of the revolution which we have been forwarding. Instead of the general manslaughter of future generations, we only propose to kill a few individuals. We shall try, at least, not to choose as blindly as crowds generally do. It will be safer, too. The distribution of tracts has been of no avail. The less we talk the better. Instead of discourses they will have——"

"The revolver," added Neradovitch. "Whom will you ever convince in this way?"

"Convince—no; but frighten." And Goldstein's eyes blazed.

Neradovitch rose, and crossing his arms on his breast, surveyed the assembly with a steady gaze. He saw that they were all of Goldstein's opinion, yet he resolved to make another effort, but Brushkoff interrupted him,—

"Do not try; it is all in vain. Did I not tell you at Akime's that your system did not work well? I'll try another one now."

"Are you for the lynching system, then?"

Neradovitch could not understand how Brushkoff, with his timid nature, had suddenly become a partisan of murder; as for Varvara, he wondered less at her

having been won over, for she had always been very fanatical.

"It is not love for arts which made me choose this path; it is simply because it is our last chance," said Brushkoff.

Neradovitch, however, would not give way without a struggle. He addressed every one of them successively, hoping at least to gain Toumanoff. But all was in vain. He understood that his influence over them was at an end; and to follow in the track of his former subjects, whom he considered his inferiors in every way, was repugnant to him.

"Well, then, all is finished," he said, rising and taking up his hat; "our roads lie asunder."

He would not admit that the road on which he had been guiding them must lead to this result. It often happens that a chief draws back in dismay from the abyss towards which he has been steadily progressing.

"We have kept some very startling news for the end of our conversation," laughed Brushkoff; "Nadia Olsheffsky is here."

"Nadia!" cried Neradovitch, aghast; "why did you not tell me before?"

His whole face was transfigured.

Toumanoff told him why she had come to O——, and how she had quarrelled with Goldstein half an hour before.

"Brave little thing!" he cried exultingly; "and

you who treated her so badly, you are not worth her little finger, all the lot of you!"

Varvara and Brushkoff laughed aloud. But Neradovitch did not listen to them; he was eagerly questioning Toumanoff as to her present abode.

"I don't know; I really forgot to ask her."

"I'll find her. In her father's house, perhaps. Good-bye."

He put on his hat and hurried away.

"Take care not to fall into Boroffsky's hands while looking for Nadia," they cried after him.

From this moment the halo which surrounded Neradovitch's head in his confederates' eyes disappeared for ever.

CHAPTER VII.

NADIA hurried back through the large, straight streets of the town. A heavy autumnal shower was pouring down. There were few passers-by. The lamps were burning dimly; the town seemed sleepy and empty. A damp breeze, laden with sea perfume, was blowing round her head. She walked quickly along, as if having but one wish—that of hurrying away, and leaving this place as far behind as possible. She now almost regretted not having listened to Dmitry, and stayed away from these sad and dreary reminiscences. The last link which had chained her to those people, who had been the companions of her earliest years, was now definitely rent asunder. But she did not rejoice at this perfect freedom; she only regretted not being able to esteem them any longer. An unutterable anguish weighed on her, and to this anguish was now added a nameless dread, provoked, perhaps, by the gloomy, damp night in this unknown part of the town. She shivered twice, the cold having pierced her light dress.

"To-morrow I'll go away," she ejaculated mentally. "I can't wait for papa's return; I'll leave a letter for him."

She felt a sickly longing for Biälastolby and her beloved relations, just as one longs for a warm and comfortable corner, wherein to rest after a long and tedious journey.

Unexpected news awaited her at home. An hour earlier, a man named Andrews, who had fulfilled the post of butler in her father's house for many years, had returned from Kieff with the news of his sudden death. His body was to be forwarded on the following day from Elisabethgrad, where he had died.

"We reached Elisabethgrad yesterday," related Andrews. "We had some business to transact there. He had been very gay during the journey, and even deigned to jest with me. In the hotel he met a friend of his, named Kondaraky, a merchant from here. They talked very eagerly together, and suddenly I saw a strange look pass over my master's face: it looked grey and old. A moment later he went up to his room. 'I shan't leave to-day,' he said; 'I don't feel quite well.' He shut himself up in his room, pacing up and down for a long time. Then all grew silent. I went several times to the door, and heard his pen scratching on the paper. Two hours passed. He did not call me. Suddenly I heard a shot. I felt dreadfully frightened. He always had a revolver in his breast-pocket. But all the doors were locked. I asked the waiter to break open one of them, but he refused until the arrival

of the police, who were expected every moment. When the door was at last forced, we found him dead and stiff on the floor. He had shot himself through the ear.

This news overpowered Nadia to such a degree that she hardly took in what had happened. Her father was dead, killed by his own hand. It seemed to her as if Andrews had been talking of a stranger, who had nothing at all to do with her.

"The doctor came," continued Andrews, "and put several questions to me: whether I knew the cause of his suicide? whether it was a misfortune or a money loss? I said that I had observed his face change while talking to Mr. Kondaraky, but that I knew nothing else. This gentleman was sent for. On the table was a note written before his death.

"Where is that note?" asked Nadia, waking up as out of a trance. She was shivering all over.

"The note was given up to the police, but here is the copy I took of it."

Nadia seized it eagerly, and began to devour it with her eyes.

"When Mr. Kondaraky came, he told the police that he had communicated the news of his daughter's arrest to my master, who had not known it. They wanted to bury him there, but I asked to be permitted to take him back to O—— to his relations, upon which they handed me 650 rubles for the journey and burial. Here they are, miss."

She did not hear these last words, being too much engrossed with the perusal of her father's letter. It ran as follows :—

"I beg to accuse no one of my death; I alone am guilty. I received just now the news of my daughter's arrest. Though I have not seen her for a long time, I have not ceased to love her. She always was my favourite, and I ought to have tried to make her leave the way she was treading. Now it is too late; no one ever returns from the place where my Sacha is. I alone am guilty of her misfortune. I gave my children neither a good education, nor a good example. I never taught them to respect what they ought to have respected. I taught them unbelief myself. Now I clearly see the effect of these teachings. In a few minutes I shan't be among the living any more. What awaits me beyond the grave I don't and won't know. I only know that I can't go on living any longer. I die intestate. All that I had belonged to my children. I never had anything myself; it was all the inheritance of their mother. I never gave them their due. I was a bad father, though passionately fond of them. If Sacha be ever pardoned, I ask my younger daughter Nadia to share with her, though she already got 25,000 rubles of me; if she be sent to Siberia,—it is awful to think of this,—all will be Nadia's, as a matter of course. I beseech her never to forget her

sister nor me, and not to cease to pray for me. I also ask her to give 1,000 rubles to my faithful servant Andrews. I can't write any more. I have no right to give any instructions; my life was bad, my death is still worse. Yet I give my fatherly blessing to my daughters, if they don't scorn it.

"SERGIUS PETROVITCH."

Nadia was unable to tear herself away from this scrap of paper. After having perused it for the fourth time, she suddenly burst into tears, as if understanding all for the first time. She pitied her poor, worthless father, and trusted to God that these last, awful minutes might have redeemed his sinful, useless life. When she reflected on his past, there was not one feature, not one remembrance of him on which she could dwell with comfort, nothing but shame and grief in life and death.

"Will you take care of your late father's papers, miss?" now asked Andrews. "I know where they are."

"No, no; later," whispered Nadia, shivering; "not now; I could not. They will bring him to-morrow, will they?" she asked. "Everything must be put in order to receive him."

"Don't trouble about that, miss," said Aniussa; "trust me, I'll do all I can for you."

In the ante-room the coffin-maker appeared, in spite of the lateness of the hour. Nadia heard how

Aniussa debated with him about the price. She hurriedly closed the door, not to hear those horrid details.

Aniussa's conference with him lasted a long time. She settled at last that the coffin was to be fetched on the following day, Saturday, at twelve o'clock, and placed on the catafalco in the house, and then she sent for the priest.

On the following day, the same on which Nadia was to have started for Biälastolby, she went to the station, accompanied by her two servants, to receive her father's body. He was taken out of the luggage-van, and carried into the dining-room, the largest room of the house. Both coffins were shut. It was impossible for Nadia to see his face, and to take leave of him for the last time. When the workmen had finished their task and withdrawn, leaving her alone with all that remained of him on earth, she sank down on her knees, trembling from head to foot, and remained on the steps of the catafalco, neither weeping nor praying. She tried to think of him, not as he was lying in the coffin, but as he had formerly been. But she did not succeed—she always saw his mutilated face, with the gaping wound in his temples. She tried to pray, but it was in vain. An icy coldness crept over her, wafted to her from the crape-covered coffin, and from the walls of the scantily furnished room. The sense of emptiness within her grew stronger and stronger, and the wish to rush

out of the house and return to her beloved relations at Biälastolby rose higher and higher in her heart.

"I think you ought to look over your father's papers, miss," said Aniussa to her; "his death must be announced to the police, and then it will be too late."

"I can't," she answered. "Let the police seize all; I don't care."

She went into her father's study,—a gay little room, furnished with green plush,—and sank down in the arm-chair before his writing-table.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE windows of the study faced a small court-yard, which had been changed into a garden, though it hardly deserved this name, for there were only a few trees and some lilac bushes in it. The trees were not yet very old, and they had hardly reached the top of the house. On the bough of a white acacia tree sat one of those little tit-mice that are never silent, not even when autumn comes on. It was chirping gaily. The day was clear and warm, and the low October sun poured its soft rays through the open window, overflooding the whole room with its brightness. Nadia leant her head on her hands, resting her elbows on the table. A light breeze played with the short curls on her forehead. But all the sweet beauty of the dying Southern nature was lost upon her. She had left nature far behind her, and was in a state of half-unconsciousness, her thoughts lingering on nothing definitely; she was benumbed, chained in by the events of the last days. It was not grief for her sister, nor despair at her father's fearful end, which thus overwhelmed her, but a sort of hopeless helplessness, such as had never befallen her before, even during the cruel

moments of her solitary life at Moscow. Where was her courage now? Had she not been surrounded by her dearest friends a few days ago, and had her life then not been one of unmitigated bliss? How had this change come about? She had arrived at O—— bright with the hope of saving her sister, and making her peace with her father before her marriage, and she had seen that there was no possibility of saving her sister, and her father had met with an untimely end! Contrasted with Sacha's misfortune, and the mutilated body of her father, she dared not think of her own happiness; it almost looked like sacrilege.

She did not know how long she had been sitting there motionless, facing the open window, for the whole house was buried in deep silence, when she was roused by some weak murmurings; the little tit-mouse, which had been chirping on the stripped acacia bough, had spread its wings and settled on the window-sill, where it began picking up some bread-crumbs, whirling and skipping to and fro, while it pushed the bits about with its small beak. The young girl gazed intently at it, for the careless little thing seemed to tell her that all is not gloom on earth, that nature's joyous life penetrates even into a house on which the hand of death is weighing, that the sun sends its bright rays down from the deep blue sky to lighten it up again. If this happens everywhere, if life thus hastens to throw off its burden of care, why should she alone carry the responsibility of other people's

crimes and griefs? Nadia began to rebel against this responsibility.

First of all, she must explain to Dmitry the cause of this new delay. Her father's funeral was to take place on Monday, and on that self-same day she would leave for Biälastolby. But she must see her sister once more, to tell her of his death. She resolved to write again to Boroffsky, and to ask the favour of a second interview with him. She took up a sheet of letter-paper and began meditating on her missive to Dmitry. She felt deeply guilty towards him, for she had not written once to him during the last week, and now that she belonged exclusively to him this one duty ought to have blotted out all others. She knew how depressed he must have been at her unaccountable silence. A sense of deep joy and peace at possessing such a harbour against all the storms of life pervaded her whole being; her pen ran quickly on; never had she written him such tender, loving words. Suddenly it seemed to her as if the lock of the door was turned, and the door itself opened. "Aniussa, what do you want?" she asked, without raising her head. Somebody had entered the room, but it was no woman's step. She turned round, and her heart almost ceased to beat as she saw the advancing figure of Neradovitch quite close to her.

"You here! What do you want?" she shrieked aghast, involuntarily drawing back.

He seemed to have lost his usual self-possession, for his voice trembled as he answered,—

"Don't be afraid, Nadeshda Sergeïevna; I won't hurt you. I learnt yesterday that you were here, and I wanted to see you once more."

"You seem to have forgotten that all is at an end between us, that we can never more have anything in common."

Now she understood for the first time that all her fears and dread were personified in this man.

Neradovitch crossed his arms on his breast.

"I advise you, Nadeshda Sèrgeïevna, to listen quietly to me, for I am here now, and I swear to you that I shan't leave without your having heard me."

His voice sounded harsh and resolute, as if her hostile reception of him had given him new strength and purpose.

"How did you find your way up here?"

"Your cook told me that you were at home."

"And did she not tell you that my father died yesterday, that he is lying cold and stiff in his coffin downstairs?" she asked, in a trembling voice.

But this made no impression on him.

"You mean to say that you can't receive such people as I am on a day like this. Does your mourning not allow of it?" he asked mockingly.

She got up, measuring him from head to foot.

"Neradovitch, break off this conversation; it can't

lead to anything, I tell you. After your doings at Biälastolby, I can't and won't have anything to do with you."

"After my doings at Biälastolby," he repeated, slowly. "Are you angry with me for the conflagration?"

But suddenly his tone changed to one of the deepest despair.

"Really, don't you see that the man who stands before you is on the verge of madness, that he has grown perfectly reckless?"

She leant heavily against the table; his blazing eyes frightened her.

"Yes, I have lost all. I have no future before me, and you need not fear me any longer. I have given up my work,—not the general work, it can never be given up,—but my personal part in it. My adherents have partly abandoned me; they consider me too soft-hearted. How ridiculous! I expect to be arrested every minute."

"Why do you stay here then?" she asked involuntarily.

"It is not worth while hiding. I don't mind, as I have nothing more to do on earth; my career is finished." In his tone there was a strange ring of despair and raillery at his own position. "One thing only keeps me back on earth—you, Nadia——"

"How dare you——"

She could not go on; her cheeks glowed, her voice forsook her, and her eyes blazed fiercely.

"I have been hiding this feeling too long," he said, as shyly as a schoolboy when confessing his first love. "Yes, I was afraid of you, Nadia; you know it." His voice trembled with suppressed tenderness. "I can't hide it any longer: the play is played out; prudence has become superfluous. In the face of death I won't give up such superhuman bliss, were it even only for an hour, for a moment."

He had spoken those words very quietly, almost inaudibly; but the fire in his eyes proved what tempest was raging within his breast. Her fear almost overwhelmed her.

"Go away," she said resolutely. "I won't listen to you any more; I'll ring for my servants."

"Don't call any one, for no one would come. The cook is alone in the house. Do you think I shall let you off thus?" he added, seeing her make a movement towards the door.

Nadia looked round, as if to make sure of another outlet, but there was only one door. She discovered, however, an electric bell, and threw herself on it with all her weight; but it was broken, and no sound answered the pressure of her fingers. Neradovitch smiled.

"Let me go, I pray, I beseech you," she pleaded. "If all that you have been saying now is true, you must understand how awful it is for me to listen to

such sayings. Go, go away. Here, under this floor, lies the body of my unhappy father."

"What do I care about your father?" he cried wildly; "you never loved him, you know you did not. Ah, Nadeshda Sergeïevna, you want to frighten me, to startle me with the idea about the dead! Nonsense! Dreams! We are resolute people; we don't shrink back before spectres."

She remained silent, and sank helplessly down into a chair near the wall. The sight of her dread and helplessness seemed to awaken a movement of human pity in his heart. Without moving from his place, he said, in a voice full of pitying tenderness,—

"You doubt the truth of my words! Alas, Nadia, Nadia, I have loved you from the first day I saw you. You were but a child then, and I was a grown-up man. You can't imagine what such a love signifies, hopelessly, passionately growing in the depth of the heart—no soft sort of boyish love. Such a love can remove mountains. Do you know that for your sake I should have been ready to throw over my whole work, and forget my inveterate hatred of society? If you, the child, had only said one word, I should have sacrificed my whole future, and turned into a peaceful and honest citizen."

These words sounded at first meaningless in Nadia's ears; but when she took in their significance her anger was roused, and starting up, she cried,—

"Well, then, know that even when I was under your guidance I always hated you, you were perfectly loathsome to me; judge then what my feelings must be now, after what I witnessed at Biälastolby! I hate you, I scorn you, and most bitterly regret having prevented Dmitry from giving you up into the hands of the police.

These words acted upon him like the wind on the flame. The name of Dmitry alone sufficed to change his passion into madness.

"You regret not having given me up to the police!" he hissed between his teeth. "You fear me still; you tremble for your Dmitry, perhaps, yet you seem to forget that it is dangerous to exasperate people in my position. But I did not come here to jest with you, Nadia; you think perhaps that your proud looks would suffice to make me fall down before you, and worship you, as of old, and then to go away silently. No; this won't do any longer. I have perhaps only a few days left in which to enjoy liberty and life; I will enjoy it. I am perfectly decided to possess you, even though it be only for an hour. You must belong to me; afterwards you can return to your Dmitry if you like."

She turned as pale as death, and began to tremble all over; but she mastered her emotion, and straightening herself, walked on towards the door, without even glancing at him. Neradovitch threw himself between her and the door.

"Are you running away?" he cried, seizing both her hands, while a wicked smile played round his mouth.

"Let me go."

Fear and passion lent her a superhuman strength; she began to wrestle with him. But he was stronger than she, and he pressed her wrists until they ached, and almost creaked under his fingers.

"Do not let us lose our time in vain, Nadia."

For a few seconds they gazed intently at each other. She tried once more to get nearer the door.

"Andrews! Andrews!" she screamed, with all her might, though her pride rebelled against this last remedy; but she trembled lest her voice were not loud enough to reach the ante-room.

"Ah!" cried Neradovitch, perfectly maddened; "you call for help, do you?"

Till now he had treated her rather leniently, not fancying the strength of a young girl very dangerous; but now he threw his right arm round her waist, while he tried to close her mouth with the left hand, and to push her back into the depth of the room. Nadia's strength was quickly ebbing away.

Suddenly hurried footsteps were heard on the stairs. The door of the adjoining room was opened. Nadia's strength returned, and with a despairing movement she freed herself from his hands.

He now felt that all was over.

"Aniussa, is it you?" cried Nadia.

"May I come in?" asked the old housekeeper.

The frightened tone of her voice struck Nadia.

"Come in," she cried, going towards the door.

The old woman gazed wonderingly at the strange man in the room, and remained silent. Neradovitch sank down on a chair, trying to master his emotion.

"There is somebody from the police downstairs," said Aniussa in a hushed voice; "they have come to put the seals on. May they enter?"

"Let them come!" exclaimed Nadia, almost joyfully.

"It can't be such a simple affair; there are five of them, and they say there may be secret papers here which they ought to secure."

On hearing these words Neradovitch turned pale, but he understood at once that every attempt to escape would only lead to his arrest, especially as Nadia would certainly be on the side of the police. To jump out of a window on the second floor was not to be advised either, so he reclined in his chair and lighted a cigarette. Nadia did not look at him any more; she did not understand the dread of Aniussa, though she felt puzzled herself at the arrival of the police. They seemed, however, to come with very peaceful intentions, and bowed very courteously, while excusing themselves for being obliged to intrude in this way."

"This is the study of your late father, is it not?" asked one of them, smiling. "We'll begin here, if you please."

"We have come because we knew that your father corresponded with many persons abroad," explained the officer of the police, bowing several times; "but you may depend upon our giving you an exact list of all the things which we are obliged to take away with us."

The officer was accompanied by a clerk, who sat down immediately, after taking some white sheets out of his portfolio. In the meantime the officer had drawn somewhat nearer to Neradovitch, exchanging a significant look with the constable who accompanied him. They began to whisper together. The constable looked very grave.

"I had better talk to him," he said in a low voice.

All this passed unobserved by Nadia; not so by Neradovitch. Though he went on with his smoking, he did not lose one movement of the officials. One of them now took up a piece of sealing-wax and looked round for a candle.

"Let us begin," said the constable, still courteously, though with a tinge of distrust, mingled with a little raillery. Aniussa brought the keys of the writing-table and of the two chests of drawers standing in the corners of the room. Nadia was so prostrate, after the violent emotion she had endured, that she

dropped down into an armchair, and remained there motionless, without minding the search, which had now begun. Neradovitch was glancing stealthily at his surroundings, trying to give himself an air of indifference; but the restless movement of his eyes and the continual play of his muscles betrayed his uneasiness. More than once his eyes met the inquisitive and mocking glance of the gendarme. He did not know what to do. He wished to get up, to bow to Nadia, and to withdraw, like a casual visitor. But as often as he decided upon this proceeding some hidden fear of Nadia kept him back, as if suspecting her of a secret wish to betray him. Nadia herself remained motionless: her face had a white and stony look, her thoughts seemed to have coagulated under the pressure of her brain. Old Andrews gave the police all the explanations they wished. Yet, in spite of the most careful search, nothing of importance was found.

"We have finished," said the officer; then going towards the door, he whispered a few hurried words to the constable.

"Are you quite sure?"

"Yes, I am. I have his likeness."

The officer shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, she is not to be trusted either. Things look very strange here."

Neradovitch gazed at the speakers with a growing uneasiness. They don't take their eyes off me, he

thought; and they don t leave the door, that I may get away.

"Will you sign this deed, please?" said the officer courteously to Nadia, after having read it through. "It is a simple formality. You have only to witness that we have fulfilled our obligations. Here is the place where you must put your name," and with his long, well-shaped nail he pointed to the place where she was to sign.

Nadia took the pen from his hand and signed, without looking at the contents of the document.

"And now we'll ask your friend to witness your signature," continued the officer, pointing to Neradovitch. "You won't refuse to do us this favour, I suppose?"

"With the greatest pleasure," said Neradovitch, getting up and taking the pen from his hand. "Where am I to sign?"

Nadia was now perfectly awake. Her eager eyes followed every movement of Neradovitch as he bent down over the paper. The two officials also gazed at him, though the same courteous smile played round their lips.

"Ivan Govorenko, merchant from Poltava," read the gendarme. "Well, that's good." He looked away, and a mocking smile lit up his face.

Nadia trembled. Her eyes were riveted on the other's face. With a violent effort of his will he had succeeded in suppressing his agitation, but his breath

came quick and short, and a cold sweat was ready to break out on his forehead.

"Do you know Mr. Govorenko very well, please?" asked the gendarme of Nadia.

She did not answer. A deep silence ensued, which lasted for a few seconds. Twice the clock was heard to strike, and it seemed to Nadia as if her heart chimed the hour, and not the clock on the chimney-piece.

"I ask you because we have some reason to doubt the authenticity of Mr. Govorenko's assertion."

The blood suddenly rose into the young girl's cheeks. What ought she to answer? A lie? Why? In order to defend a man who had done her such a grievous offence, and who had been the cause of Anna Grigorievna's illness. All these thoughts darted quickly through her brain, and in her eyes burned the threatening light of the law of retaliation.

"His name is not Govorenko, but Neradovitch," she answered resolutely.

The officer's face shone with the light of triumph. The constable threw open the door of the adjoining room and called out aloud, "Tomine, come along!" Andrews and Aniussa looked at the whole scene without understanding a word.

Neradovitch was dumbfounded. The muscles of his face trembled with an expression of devilish triumph. His eyes were bloodshot. He turned towards the constable, and pointing to Nadia, said,—

"You are going to arrest me? Well, then, arrest her too, for she is my confederate."

"This is no business of yours, Mr. Neradovitch," said the officer, smiling, and gnawing at his moustache.

Nadia was quite thunderstruck.

"I your confederate!" she cried. "Why, I hate and abhor you more than any one else on earth!"

"This hatred will be of no use to you," he answered, with a wicked gleam in his eyes. "Gentlemen, please to listen to my deposition. This girl, Nadeshda Olsheffsky, joined our confederation two years ago. She accompanied us to Zurich, and went with us to Moscow, when we repaired there for a more active propaganda. She assisted at all our meetings, and knew all about our secrets."

"Your secrets were perfectly loathsome to me!" she cried.

"May be; but a year ago you did not think so. Deny it, if you dare."

The sobs of Aniussa were audible at the far end of the room.

"Your deposition will be taken down later," said the gendarme. "But now I must arrest you."

The porter went for a droshky. Neradovitch was taken downstairs by two men, who held him so tight that he could not think of escaping.

Nadia sank down on her chair and covered her face with her hands. She was hardly able to take in

all that had passed. Wild, incoherent ideas whirled through her brain.

"What's the matter, dearest?" whispered the old housekeeper, sobbing and drawing near to her. "My goodness, how awful all this is!"

Nadia did not hear her. She was almost lifeless. The officer was standing near her, not knowing what to say, only drumming with his fingers on the back of his chair. However accustomed he was to such scenes, he felt very sorry for this lovely girl, so suddenly drawn into the vortex of political life. Aniussa was wringing her hands in helpless despair. A few moments passed. At last the officer summoned up his courage.

"I am very, very sorry to be obliged to trouble you on such a day as this one," he said at last.

"What! are you still here? What do you want?" she asked, turning her large, wondering eyes on him.

"I am so sorry," he repeated, "but you must understand. I must take some measures after all that happened just now."

She still gazed at him without understanding.

"We have just arrested a man who belongs to the very worst sort. His presence in your house, his acquaintance with you, would suffice. But then, you see, he even accused you of being his confederate. Therefore——"

"What! are you going to arrest me, too?" she cried wildly, starting up, not trusting her own ears.

"Not arrest you; of course not," he answered, with his blandest smile. "I'll only ask you to accompany me to the police department and give your deposition, after which you will certainly be set at liberty. There's our carriage," he added, as Tomine re-entered the room.

"You have sent for a carriage," cried Nadia, understanding all the horror of her position. "You had better say plainly that you are going to arrest me; are you not ashamed of yourself?"

She looked proudly into his eyes. He looked away, not knowing what to say.

"Are they going to arrest you, Nadeshda Sergeïevna?" cried Aniussa, beside herself with grief.

"I tell you that I have broken with these people long ago," said Nadia. "Neradovitch came here only by chance; he stayed here against my will. A burning flush mounted to her brow as she remembered the scene with him; her dignity quailed before a further explanation.

"Why do I waste so many words?" she cried. "You won't believe me."

"I do believe you; I am happy to trust you, and feel quite sure that all will be well; but I can't do anything, I am simply on duty here."

"And if I refuse to accompany you, what then? will you carry me off by force?"

He did not answer; an involuntary emotion moistened his eyes.

"We won't leave you," cried Aniussa, throwing her arms round the young girl. "What would Anna Grigorievna say if we did? What would Dmitry Alexandrovitch think?"

A flush of shame dyed Nadia's face. She trembled at the thought that Dmitry's name should be dragged before those cold official people, who only thought of fulfilling their duties.

"Let us go," she said resolutely; "I feel strong enough. May I take some dresses with me? can I keep my maid?"

"As many dresses as you like," he answered; "as for a maid, it is an impossibility."

Nadia did not answer. Her pride gave her strength. She ordered Aniussa to put some dresses and linen in a bag, and then she did her best to comfort the old woman.

"It is nothing, Aniussa; to-morrow I'll be back again," she said. But she did not believe her own words. She had but one wish—to get away as quickly as possible, and put an end to this loathsome scene. She kissed the old housekeeper, and hurrying downstairs, knelt a moment before her father's coffin. She did not cry, not wishing to give way to her hopeless grief before strange people. She sat down in the carriage beside the gendarme, and the isvotshik brought her quickly to the police department.

Aniussa wrote a letter to Dmitry that same day. It was the one he received on his return from the station.

CHAPTER IX.

ON the following morning Nicholas Ossipovitch was sitting in his study enjoying the conviction that no petitioners would disturb him in his work, the day being Sunday. In his new position at O—— he was so overwhelmed with business that he, the man of the iron will, devoted to work, was almost unable to master all that devolved on him. However, exactly at half-past eleven, the bell was rung in the ante-room, and the gendarme captain, Bandurine, —the same who had arrested Nadia—was announced.

His appearance did not startle Boroffsky, his official position often bringing him such visitors; but when he told him, with the triumphant mien of a conqueror, that he had arrested both Nadia and Neradovitch, an indignant surprise lit up the face of Nicholas Ossipovitch, and made him forget his usual prudence.

"What! arrested Nadeshda Sergeïevna Olsheffsky!" he exclaimed; and the officer was struck with the subdued passion of his voice. He had expected warm expressions of gratitude, while his news was only received with an exclamation of disgust.

But Boroffsky recovered his self-possession very quickly.

"Make your report; I'll listen to it," he said severely, sitting down in his armchair.

Bandurine told all the details of the arrest with business-like precision, dwelling above all on the importance of such a great culprit as Neradovitch having been caught, while all that touched Nadia was of no importance at all in his eyes. Boroffsky, on the contrary, was hardly able to hide his impatience whenever the former was mentioned. "Go on, go on," he said, as soon as Bandurine grew loquacious on his account.

"Where did you put her?" he asked suddenly; "not in one of the usual cells, I hope?"

The captain did not believe his own ears; never yet had Boroffsky inquired after the comfort of his prisoners.

"Nadia Sergeïevna Olsheffsky was put in a particular room, very nice and suitable, indeed, in the chief building of the police department; there she will remain till other depositions are taken."

"She must be set at liberty at once!" he mentally ejaculated, but did not dare to say it aloud.

"I do not see the slightest reason for shutting this young girl up," he said; "the deposition of such a wretch as Neradovitch cannot serve as a proof; who knows what obnoxious motives prompted his slander?"

"The deposition of Neradovitch was no slander, your excellency; besides, the fact of his having been

made a prisoner in Miss Olsheffsky's house speaks against her."

Boroffsky made an impatient gesture; he did not like to confess that he felt himself at a loss to account for his presence in her house. For one moment it flashed through his mind that the young girl had perhaps not broken entirely with her past, but he quickly thrust this idea aside as perfectly incompatible with her character; he was too good a judge of others to harbour such a thought for a moment.

"But this is not all, your excellency," Bandurine began again. "Yesterday evening both prisoners were confronted, and Neradovitch repeated his deposition in her presence, with such assurance that it is almost impossible to entertain any doubt about the truth of it."

He opened the secret lock of his portfolio with his beautiful, well-shaped nails, and took some written papers out of it.

But Boroffsky did not move his hand to take them.

"What did Miss Olsheffsky answer when she was questioned, for I suppose she was?"

"She refused to give any explanation whatever, having nothing to do with this secret society, and having spent the last months in the house of her aunt, Mme. Koretzky."

At these words Boroffsky tossed his head impatiently, and his hand closed convulsively over his watch chain.

"Miss Olsheffsky also declared"—and here the captain tinkled with his broad sword—"that the Koretzky family was well known to your excellency."

Boroffsky did not answer; his brow was deeply knit, as if he pondered on some grave recollections.

"She even asked to be allowed to write to your excellency."

"Well!"

"There was no reason to refuse her this permission, so we gave her pen and ink. She began to write; then suddenly tearing up the note, she said she would rather speak with you herself."

Boroffsky started up and began to pace up and down the room.

"Give me the deposition of Neradovitch," he said harshly.

It was a most detailed relation of Nadia's past—her appearance in their society, her journey abroad, and her sojourn among them in Moscow. Boroffsky learnt all these details now for the first time. His eyes devoured greedily every line, and he experienced a sort of sickly, harsh enjoyment. While perusing the paper, a feeling of faintness crept over him, for he saw that a trial would be unavoidable, and then Nadia would be lost. "This paper must be destroyed," he thought.

"No one else has seen this document?" he asked, in a trembling voice. "Did you conduct the examination?'

"I did; but I thought it my duty to acquaint the chief authorities of the gendarme department with the result of it."

Boroffsky glanced angrily at him.

"You were right; you could not have acted in any other way," he said sulkily. "I'll keep the deposition here, for I am going to conduct the examination myself; of course not without the co-operation of the gendarme corps," he added, with a scoffing air.

He then dismissed the captain without shaking hands with him, and paced his study in the most violent agitation. His first idea had been to burn the fatal paper. Certainly Neradovitch might repeat his deposition, but when conducting the trial himself he could eliminate all that bore upon Nadia. He had only to give the orders, and she would be set free at once. He already enjoyed the idea of telling the lovely girl himself that the doors of her prison were open to her. How delightful to be able to make people happy with a stroke of one's pen. But the cold and calculating intelligence of Boroffsky did not allow him to give way to such dreams; he quickly recovered the self-possession which had forsaken him for a few moments. He took up the deposition of Neradovitch once more, but alas! not to annihilate it. He read it over again, though every word of it was engraved on his mind. It suddenly struck him that other eyes had already perused it besides Bandurine; and if others knew of her arrest, he could not set

her free, for in their eyes she was as guilty, and perhaps more so, than all those who had been arrested before her. Her name was well known, she was the sister of another guilty woman, and Neradovitch had been made prisoner in her room.

He resumed his wanderings in the study, vividly and clearly picturing to himself the inevitable results of her being set at liberty. The political department had been confided to him as to a man of energy and cleverness. What would the other directors say if he consented to liberate a girl on whom such heavy suspicion weighed? how explain this unprecedented generosity? With her youth and beauty, would not those who looked with envy at his rapid and brilliant career avail themselves of such an event to do him harm? He was only thirty-three years old, and occupied already one of the first places among the attorney-generals in Russia. A large field of activity was open to him; a few short years, and who knows to what heights he might rise, what high authority he would hold in his hands! And this he was to sacrifice to the love of a woman! But just as these thoughts passed through his mind a wave of deep, unutterable love swept over his heart. Could he indeed consent to sacrifice this beautiful being to his career, look quietly on while the only woman he had ever loved on earth was swallowed up in an abyss of despair? Again the voice of passion protested loudly against such a proceeding, and a sud-

den, all-overwhelming thought flashed through his mind, telling him that if Nadia owed him her life, liberty, and happiness, then—— He already revelled in her possession. Then—— But a sobering, scoffing voice now rose within him. What then—gratitude? Could he reckon on a woman's gratitude? Supposing even this feeling to exist in her heart, could he change it into love? And would he care for a love extorted in this way? To set Nadia free would be as much as to send her back to Dmitry. No, this he could not do. He knew very well that even if he appeared to her in the light of a saving angel she would never love him, nor swerve in her allegiance to her cousin. Never? Might he not try what fear could do? Would she not waver and hesitate when she knew that she would be shut up in a dark prison, banished to Siberia, perhaps? Would she not gladly buy her freedom in this way? He had already given up all idea of exculpating her; he now only wished to inspire her with a tenfold consciousness of her danger, invent new, if possible convincing, proofs of her culpability. And this wished-for proof was in his hand. The letter written by Neradovitch, and given to him by Elena, would condemn her. He took it out of his portfolio and perused it once more, though he knew it by heart. Along with the deposition of Neradovitch, this letter formed the most convincing proof of her guilt. He resolved to use it as his last weapon. Then even she would not be able to resist.

Nicholas Ossipovitch was seldom mistaken in his judgment of people's characters, yet his estimation of them was always a little below their moral worth. For the present he only wanted a weapon against her; having given up the hope to gain her love, he only wished to possess her; and to gain this he was ready to make every possible sacrifice, even to give up his brilliant career. She must belong to him, or—— But he would not even consider the possibility of such an emergency. And afterwards? He once thought of making her his wife; now this was out of the question. He could not marry a girl who had been on the road to perdition. Though he was perfectly convinced of her innocence, yet her sojourn in prison would throw a shadow on her. She might be his mistress—his wife never. He did not confess this in clear words, but some such thought lingered in his inmost heart, and made him blush at himself.

At one o'clock his droshky set him down at the door of the police department.

CHAPTER X.

NADIA passed a peaceful night in her new abode. She felt too weak and prostrate to remember the past or care for the future. There was a strange emptiness in her head—her thoughts were broken and unconnected, and she wanted nothing but sleep and quiet. That faithful comforter of youth soon carried her far away from all her worries. When she awoke on the following morning, she gazed with a wondering look at the naked walls, with their cheap, grey hangings, and could not at once account for her being in these strange surroundings. She had even forgotten that she was there against her own will, for the room did not look like a prison, all was clean and neat, and it had rather the orderly look of a chancery. The two high windows, facing the court, were without curtains, and half a dozen straw chairs were ranged along the walls. On a long table, covered with an oil-cloth, stood a large, angular ink-stand, such as are used in justice courts. This room had formerly served as a sub-division of chancery, but of late, the prisons being very much crowded, more important prisoners had been put into it. By-and-by

Nadia's memory cleared. She did not yet take in her awful position quite fully; the last occurrences had been so unexpected, and had seemed so absurd, that she could not yet believe in them. Youth does not easily submit to grief, but struggles against it, while older people open their doors to it as to a well-known guest.

She got up and dressed quickly, wondering what she ought to do next. It was long before she grasped the idea that every project was in vain; that it was not in her power to do anything. She then felt the whole awe of the word "prison"; and her heart sank within her when she thought what Dmitry would suffer when he heard of her arrest.

Suddenly the bolt of the door was withdrawn, and the keeper brought her her tea-tray. She refused the tea, but asked him if she could be allowed to see the officer who had arrested her the day before.

"I don't know," he answered curtly.

At that moment Nadia felt indeed entirely shut out from the surrounding world; she could not even see those who held her fate in their hands. This perfect helplessness crushed her. Little by little she was invaded by that sense of despair which travellers experience when they get lost in the steppe, or are overtaken by a snowstorm. Whether help comes or not, nothing remains but to wait and wait, while the night is getting darker and darker, and the snow-flakes fall thicker and thicker from the

sky. A fit of shivering shook her slender frame. She began to listen to the far-away voices in the prison, to the steps in the corridor; but the indifferent and sleepy life of a crown building went its way without minding her. Doors were opened and shut, loud voices were audible in the corridor, but none stopped at her door. She thought of Boroffsky. Yesterday she had intended to write to him, but her pride forbade it. To ask a favour of him seemed dreadful. Yet he could set her free at once; she knew this. She never doubted his willingness to do it. The hours dragged on slowly and sadly. At last she heard quick, resolute steps coming down the corridor, and a voice asked close to her door,—

"Is it here? Then please do not trouble about me. I must talk with Miss Olsheffsky myself."

The door was opened, and Boroffsky appeared on the threshold, while the noise of quickly retreating steps were audible in the corridor.

Nadia had never felt such an overwhelming joy as now. Boroffsky's face, on the contrary, expressed that official grief which people always show on mournful occasions. He observed the impression his appearance made on the young girl, and his heart beat loudly. He hurried up to her, and grasped her hand firmly.

"Could I ever have foreseen that we were to meet in this way?"

She pressed his hand, and answered almost gaily,—

"Oh, now that you have come, I shall soon get away from here."

"If you had listened to me this would never have happened," he said, avoiding a direct answer. "How often did I tell you to break definitely with these people. How could you receive Neradovitch?"

Nadia had expected to hear quite different words from him. She gave him a startled look.

"Do you know how it happened? If you don't know, you can't judge."

She told him all, softening as much as possible Neradovitch's offensive words. Boroffsky listened silently, his head bent down. The expression of grief on his face deepened, and gave him the appearance of a doctor listening to a hopeless case.

"I see that you don't believe me," she concluded, and in her eyes joy gave place to a deep sadness.

"I know you too well not to believe you," he said quietly, answering her glance; "but will others believe you? These circumstances are so strange——"

"But the decision depends upon you alone," she cried hotly, for her heart still thrilled with the hope that he would release her as soon as he had been told all that had happened. "Our acquaintance is not from yesterday. You ought not to judge me as others might."

Boroffsky shook his head.

"To my regret I must confess that this is not so easy as it seems," he answered sadly. "Neradovitch

deposed yesterday that you are a member of his secret society; and it will be hard, very hard work to convince the justice-court."

She again interrupted him.

"But this justice-court only consists of you; and how often have I heard you maintain that there was a great affinity between our minds!"

Boroffsky bit his nether lip till a bloody streak was visible on it.

"Thoughts are waves: they recede before us, we can't be responsible for them. But what I learned from this paper"—he drew the deposition of Neradovitch out of his pocket—"was perfectly new to me, I confess. Peruse it yourself, please."

He handed her the document. While she read he watched every movement of her face greedily. She remained perfectly quiet, only a faint blush mounted to her brow.

"Is this true?" he asked, as she returned the paper to him. "Tell me it is a lie, a slander!"

"It is true from the beginning to the end. But that does not matter. From the first day of our acquaintance my past was known to you. This paper does not tell you anything new. But a whole year has passed since then. The girl whom you knew at Biälastolby had nothing in common with the old Nadia. This deposition has only to do with the former one. But why do I tell you all this? You are as convinced of it as I am myself."

"You won't understand me, Nadeshda Sergeïevna. It is not my opinion which is of importance here. If your past had not been unveiled, no one could have hurt you. Now it is different, and I have come to confer with you about the means to avoid a trial."

Boroffsky spoke in a very dry tone. The remembrance of Biälastolby, and the circumstances which had produced the change in the young girl's feelings, did not dispose him to mercy.

"It will be a loss of time, Nicholas Ossipovitch," she said coldly and sharply, as if she were the judge and he the culprit. "Do you intend to set me at liberty or not?"

He was going to answer somewhat evasively, but she went on,—

"One of two things, Nicholas Ossipovitch. Either you deem me guilty, and then I must answer you as my judge; or you deem me innocent, and then you must restore me my liberty at once."

"I am here as your friend," he answered, trying once more to avoid giving a direct answer.

She made a protesting movement.

"Well then, as your acquaintance, if you prefer, who wishes very much to find an issue out of this affair. But the justice-court won't have these considerations. They will pass over your change of opinions, and only remember the fact that you are a member of a secret society."

"Yet the power of which you talk is not a machine, moved by secret springs; it is a living power, in the hands of intelligent human beings. What! they don't mind my being no longer what I was? And because they happen to get an inkling of my past, I am to be condemned according to it, though it does not exist any more! This is impossible! You slander your judges, or you still suspect me, perhaps."

When Boroffsky made up his mind to go and see Nadia, he was firmly decided to tell her that he believed in her innocence; but her cold and sharp words made him change his mind. It would be necessary to frighten her; therefore he could not appear as a saving angel, perfectly convinced of her innocence.

"Neradovitch was arrested in your house," he said, with an effort. "One has a right to presume that you had not broken definitely with him."

"Oh! so you speak at last!" she cried, her face burning with indignation. "What! Neradovitch makes an accusation against me, and you consider me his accomplice! I did not suppose you to be so short-sighted. You are not speaking the truth, Boroffsky. You know the worth of this information, and the justice-court will value it rightly. Of what can they accuse me? Of having once experienced feelings which all people, more or less, dream of in their youth. And don't you think that

all my friends at Biälastolby, even my poor aunt, will rise up in my favour?"

Boroffsky stared at her. How little had he expected such firmness and such logic in this child in the moment of danger. He now resolved upon producing the letter which Elena had given him. Before leaving his study he had put it into his pocket.

"We have not sufficient proofs, you think. What do you say to this letter?"

He showed her the envelope with her address on it, but did not let it out of his hand. She recognised it at once.

"Do you think the judges will believe in your innocence when they see this?"

Nadia never thought of disclaiming the letter; she was much too proud to do such a thing.

"This letter was stolen from me in my room," she said, with withering scorn. "Nice means you use, indeed! I wonder how you got it!"

"By the merest chance, I can assure you. If I wished to hurt you, I should not be here. I am not your enemy, Nadia; I have but one desire—that of saving you."

He said this with reproachful sadness, almost tenderness; but this tinge of tenderness frightened the young girl a thousand times more than the approaching trial.

"There is but one way of saving you, and that is an unlawful one," he continued, dropping his voice,

"I cannot set you free unless I destroy these papers and stop the trial. As for Neradovitch, I shall know how to enforce silence upon him. But this proceeding involves the greatest danger to me, for I am not the only one who has read these papers."

"Danger to you!" she repeated coldly and distrustingly. "Do you really want me to believe in your readiness to sacrifice yourself for my good?"

"Yes; however strange this may seem to you, it is true. It is perfectly impossible to hide everything so carefully that nothing will ooze out. People will wonder why I set you free, in spite of these convincing proofs. Yet I am ready to do it, Nadia."

"I don't believe in the disinterestedness of such a sacrifice," she cried scoffingly.

"Nor do I dream of doing it without a reward."

As he said these words, large drops of cold perspiration started on his brow. From the beginning of this conversation he had trembled at the thought of pronouncing these words; now there was no possibility of drawing back any more.

"Do you not understand that I care very little whether you are innocent or not?"

Nadia felt quite bewildered; but it began to dawn slowly upon her that she ought not to expect any mercy from the hands of this man, and a silent despair crept over her.

"I am ready to infringe the law on your account," he cried hotly; "not because you are unjustly accused,

but because I love you. You refused me, Nadia; do you remember? Refused me coldly and scornfully when I asked you to be my wife, but now"—he paused a moment—"you will be mine?"

As soon as these last words had been spoken, he lost all fear, one single feeling burned within him—the indomitable wish of conquering her. Scarlet spots appeared on his pale cheeks, his grey, deep-set eyes burned with an unholy fire.

"Your fate is in your own hands now. Say one word, and you leave the prison to-day; the deposition of Neradovitch will be destroyed."

Nadia was thunderstruck; this strange declaration of love took away her breath. She found no answer, her tongue refused its service, and she remained before him struck dumb with indignation and wonder.

"I know," he said, with a sort of wild ferocity, "that I must look ridiculous, even disgusting, in your eyes. It is impossible for me to claim your love, nor do I want it. Chance made me the arbiter of your fate, and I profit by it; I have suffered long enough."

"Neradovitch! great heavens! Neradovitch said just the same words yesterday!" she exclaimed almost unconsciously, wringing her hands in despair.

But he had already regretted his cruel words. A rush of love and pity swept over his soul, and quenched all the wicked feelings of his heart.

"Forgive me what I said just now, Nadia," he cried, and his face was for one moment transfigured

with the torturing conviction that no entreaties on his part could ever provoke the slightest answer in her breast. "I love you madly, despairingly!"

"You love me! And you offer me this loathed bargain! You offer me my liberty if I become your —— You can't imagine how awful this is!"

She buried her face in her hands to hide the tears of despair that were welling up in her eyes; his tender, loving words made her feel more wretched than all his threats had done.

"A great change came over him: he blushed at his own words, and his love to her conquered all his doubts.

"You don't understand me!" he cried wildly. "How can you put such a construction on my words? I ask you to leave the prison as my bride. I only beseech you to give me your word now."

He thought thus to have blotted out all remembrance of his offence, and imagined she would grasp his saving hand with a sense of deep gratitude.

"There won't be a trial," he said, with self-complacency; "let them judge me as much as they like, if you only understand and value me, Nadia."

The young girl had recovered her self-possession. She raised her head, and her large eyes gazed at him with an unutterable contempt.

"Understand and value all the admiration your sacrifice would provoke? This is what you mean, Boroffsky." She spoke quietly, but so distinctly that

every word sounded in his ear like the vibration of a chord. "Well then, know that I prefer a thousand times prison and judgment, even banishment, to the shame of being your wife."

Boroffsky stood before her like one petrified.

"You think," she said, with an expression of unutterable scorn, "that I did not understand the proposition you made me just now, and which you termed a despairing one? Shame on you, you low-minded man! You think you can awe me into becoming your wife. Nice happiness we should enjoy together! How can you, the clever man, for one moment doubt the answer I'll give you? I have devoted my whole life to Dmitry Koretzky, and only intend living for him. Here you have my answer. Do you not know that my separation from him is my only real, overwhelming grief, beside which the fear of you dwindles into nothing? Ah! you offer me my liberty if I become your wife! What would liberty be to me at that cost?"

To Boroffsky all the abusive words of the young girl were concentrated in the one fact, that of her love to Dmitry, which she thrust into his face with such a fearless triumph. In this love lay all her power, and the mention of it drove Boroffsky to the verge of madness.

"Then wait for him through all eternity," he hissed through his teeth; "we shall see whether this Mr. Koretzky will be of any help to you. Do you really

think he will go on crying after you, when you are some thousands of versts removed from him? Let us see whether he will follow you to Siberia or not."

He uttered these words with a sense of keen enjoyment, and turning away from her, hurried towards the door.

That same day Nadeshda Olsheffsky was transferred into a prisoner's cell, and the examination took its usual course. Boroffsky did not forget to place the letter of Neradovitch with the other papers.

CHAPTER XI.

A WHOLE week had passed since Nadia's arrest. The examination was carried on in a quick and energetic way. She had been questioned several times, and the judges had done their best to extort new confessions from her; but she adhered stoutly to her first deposition, and they grew exasperated at her denials. At last she was left in peace, and that deep stillness, that entire seclusion from the rest of the world, which is a thousand times more trying than threats and persecution, surrounded her on all sides.

In the meantime the examination went on, drawing within the meshes of its wide-spreading nets all sorts of persons, perfectly unknown to each other. All the threads of this business were in Boroffsky's hands, though he did not take an open part in it. During this whole week neither Nadia nor any other prisoner saw him.

Dmitry arrived on Saturday morning, and went straight to Nadia's former home, where he learnt all the details of this sad business from his old housekeeper. She also gave him the unfinished letter which Nadia had been penning to him on the day

of her arrest. The minutes in which he read these passionate lines, so suddenly interrupted, were perhaps the most dreadful of his whole life—the unfinished letter spoke so much more openly than she had ever done herself. Like a mute but eloquent witness, it threw a glaring light on the moment when her young life had been so suddenly crushed.

During the course of the following day he went to all those persons from whom he was the most likely to get the permission to see her; but he met with nothing but denials, though under different pretexts. The chief director was not in town; the gendarme general did not receive; the court of justice was shut, on account of Sunday. In the police building, where no Sunday exists, Dmitry found himself surrounded by official obstacles; the whole official world rose before him like an enchanted wood, into which nobody penetrated. He did not find Boroffsky at home, and went away without leaving a card, knowing very well that he would never succeed in seeing him if Boroffsky knew he was in town.

On Monday morning Nicholas Ossipovitch was sitting in his armchair before his writing-table in his official reception-room. He had just dismissed his assistant, and was busy with a bill of indictment in a case of murder. Suddenly quick, loud steps in the adjoining room were audible, and a voice asked after him; the secretary had not yet given an answer,

before the door was thrown open, and Boroffsky saw Dmitry standing before him. He started up, and leant his hand on the table, unable to hide the unpleasant impression which this visit made upon him. The muscles of his face quivered, and his voice sounded broken, while he vainly sought to put on the dignified look of his official position.

"Excuse me, Dmitry Alexandrovitch, but I am very much occupied; you were certainly told——"

Dmitry answered in an easy, matter-of-fact voice. He felt it a very hard task to address the man who held Nadia's fate in his hands, and wished to remain as quiet as possible.

"I have perhaps broken through the rules of the prison," he said; "but there are circumstances which are so important that all usual formalities must give way to them, so I hope you will excuse me."

Boroffsky pointed to a chair without answering. He could not get rid of the strange feeling of shyness which pervaded him. They did not shake hands, for they were both much too conscious of the deep-rooted hatred which they experienced towards each other, and which must break through all barriers sooner or later.

"My cousin, Nadeshda Olsheffsky, was arrested here nine days ago," he said, after sitting down and gazing straight at Boroffsky, who frowned and seemed to wait for him to go on. "You don't deny this, I suppose?" he added.

"I am listening to you," Boroffsky thought fit to answer.

"You won't refuse, I suppose, to tell me on what plea she was arrested, and with what right she is still kept in prison?"

Boroffsky felt a strong wish to answer this question in an insolent way, but the steadfast gaze of Dmitry, and a growing sense of the awkwardness of his own position, forced him to remain quiet.

"Allow me to answer you with another question: are you aware of the circumstances in which your cousin was arrested?"

"I am."

"Then you will understand, I suppose, that the presence of Neradovitch in her own house was a sufficient reason."

"I don't accuse the police; I only wonder that she was not set at liberty the very moment the mistake was discovered."

"You talk of a mistake," said Boroffsky, with a studied astonishment; "you are not aware then of the deposition of Neradovitch concerning your cousin?"

He emphasized the last word. But Dmitry tried to remain calm, for he wanted above all to learn as much as possible about Nadia's present position and the course of the trial.

Nicholas Ossipovitch answered all his questions very candidly, saying he had the right to know all

the details, and enjoying perhaps at the same time the power he had to make his happier rival smart under the recital of Nadia's sufferings.

"Can you really listen to the words of such a wretch as Neradovitch?" cried Dmitry.

"You forget that this wretch was found in your cousin's room, quite alone with her," said Boroffsky, with a wicked smile; "this proves a certain intimacy, you will confess."

"Do not dare to slander her with a single word," cried Dmitry, with blazing eyes and a trembling voice.

Boroffsky rose slowly.

"I think, Mr. Koretzky," he said, with dignity, "that I have given you all the details you can wish for, therefore our conversation has no further aim."

"What! you fancy I shall be satisfied with this? I have heard all you have to say, and I now ask you to explain to me how you, knowing Nadia and my family as you do, have not put an end to this torturing business long ago?"

Boroffsky flushed scarlet with excitement. He opened his lips, but Dmitry interrupted him.

"Wait a moment," he said. "Do not deny that it is in your power to turn the scales of this business to whatever side you like. You know that Nadia is not a member of any secret society, my mother is ready to vouch for it, and knowing this you keep her in prison, only because it is your personal wish to see her involved in a criminal trial.

They were standing face to face, nothing but the small writing-table between them.

"Why do you impute such extraordinary motives to me, Mr. Koretzky?" asked Boroffsky, with a studied indifference. "Or do you fancy your cousin ought to be treated in a particularly lenient way?"

This veiled irony exasperated Dmitry.

"Why do you use such unworthy subterfuges?" he cried. "You know very well that the law in your hands is nothing but the means of attaining your object! Confess openly that you are going to take a most cruel, contemptible revenge on this helpless girl!"

"Leave this room, please," said Boroffsky, with darkening eyes. "I won't——"

And his hand tried to reach the bell on the table; but Dmitry laid hold of his wrist, and holding it firmly, continued,—

"Don't ring the bell. I shall not leave before I have got an answer. Will you set Nadia free under the guardianship of my mother?"

"I shall not give you an answer, depend upon it; if you want an exception to be made for Miss Olsheffsky, address yourself to the chief director of the police."

"Do not fear, I shall know how to find a just judge. But there is one thing you have not the right to refuse. Allow me to see her."

"In your quality of cousin?"

"In that of her future husband. The law allows even criminals to see their near relations."

Boroffsky remained silent for a few moments, as if enjoying the thought that Dmitry had been obliged to ask a favour of him after so sharp an encounter.

"The permission which you claim entirely rests with me, and in this case I don't think it advisable to allow Nadeshda Sergeïevna to have any intercourse whatever with strangers. The course of the examation requires this."

A flood of indignation swept over Dmitry's heart. He remembered on what intimate footing this man now standing before him had visited at Biälastolby, how he had sued for the hand of the girl whom he now prosecuted in the name of justice.

"Are you not ashamed of yourself? You who know the whole absurdity of this accusation, you who wanted yourself to marry her!"

These words added another shade to the usual pallor of Boroffsky's face, and his smile grew cruel.

"My duties never interfere with my friendship. Nadeshda Sergeïevna is not less guilty than any other woman in my eyes. I very much regret that she is your bride."

He shrugged his shoulders with a laugh. This was too much.

"Villain!" cried Dmitry, and with the glove which he held in his left hand, he lashed Boroffsky's face.

He turned deadly pale. His first movement was

to throw himself upon his rival, but he stopped short, as if the uniform he wore and the official look of his room put him in mind of the cool majesty of his dignity as a judge.

"I'll pay you for this!" he said, grasping the back of his chair.

Dmitry felt utterly crushed. The insufferable, burning, heartaching and unconquerable hatred which filled his heart had found a momentary vent in this offensive treatment of his enemy, but it was succeeded by the conviction that there was no hope left for him to save her.

"Here is my address," he said, throwing his card on the table. "I shall expect your seconds at the hotel where I am staying."

Dmitry went directly to the gendarme-general; but he had not yet returned from his journey, and was only expected back on Thursday next. Three days of unbearable uncertainty for him! of unspeakable sufferings for Nadia! He was firmly convinced that all would be right if he could only see the general. This overwhelming grief had come so suddenly upon him that he would not believe in it. Unhappy people seldom take in the whole hopelessness of their position at once, and are very much like patients, who hope to be cured until their very end. In the meantime he went to see all the people in whose power it was to save Nadia. They all listened to him, and promised to do their best, but they soon

wearied of his continual pleading, and gave signs of impatience. Dmitry was like a man standing before a secret lock, which no one could open as long as the hidden spring was not found. And this spring could be no one else but the chief director, he fancied.

At last Thursday came, and the general, always punctual, returned, but so late that no one could be admitted. On Friday morning he did not receive, on account of some committee-sittings, and Dmitry was on the verge of despair. But the end was nearer than he expected. The next day the general sent for him, and he hurried to his office with a joyous face, though an inward voice told him that this call did not bode anything good.

When he was ushered into the office, the general was standing beside his writing-table, leaning with his left hand on it. He beckoned Dmitry to him, and without sitting down,—

"Young man," he said, with a tinge of parental authority in his voice, "I have sent for you to give you a little bit of advice, which, I trust, will be of use to you."

He coughed and straightened his left epaulette.

"You are a man of high culture and of good family, who ought to set a good example to others; and instead of that, you have compromised yourself with people of very doubtful reputation, I am told. During your stay here you have interceded everywhere for a girl who is under a very grave

political accusation. You behaved towards the attorney-general in a most insolent manner."

The tone in which the general said this did not seem to imply that he pitied Boroffsky very much.

"It is very wrong of you to behave thus, and I am very sorry to be obliged to talk in this way to a man like you."

Dmitry listened silently to this reproof, though his heart throbbed violently.

"Are you aware of all the details of this business?" he asked, in a trembling voice.

The general made an impatient gesture, as if to imply that he did not care for these details.

"Do you know that this young girl is my bride?"

"So much the worse for you, young man. This only corroborates the suspicions which were communicated to me on your account. I advise you to give up all this; it is simply madness."

Dmitry succeeded once more in mastering his excitement.

"Allow me to complete the official details which have been given you, your excellency," he said.

The general only answered with a nod.

Dmitry had been preparing his speech for three days; all his hopes were centred on it. Now that the moment had come, he talked with feverish anguish, his words were hurried and unconnected, and his agitation grew with the conviction that he was

spoiling his business through his violent excitement. When he came to Nadia's arrest, the remembrance of Boroffsky's crime robbed him of his presence of mind, and he could not repress the indignant words which trembled on the tip of his tongue.

The general stopped him. He had recognised the ring of truth in Dmitry's words, but he could not change his official standing-point nor put aside the views which had already been instilled into his mind. In his eyes Nadia was nothing but a casual prisoner, guilty of a political crime, who ought to be treated with the greatest distrust. Besides, he could not allow any one to talk in this way of the chief representative of official authority.

"Don't forget yourself!" he said severely; "you have already treated Mr. Boroffsky disrespectfully."

"Disrespectfully!" exclaimed Dmitry, with a loud laugh; "only disrespectfully! I very much regret if Mr. Boroffsky has already forgotten the way in which our conversation ended."

Boroffsky had not thought fit to mention Dmitry's treatment of him; a box on the ear, without witnesses, could remain unconfessed, after all. He had only described Dmitry as a very dangerous individual, who was associating with well-known members of a secret society. The general, who did not always trust blindly to Boroffsky's words, telegraphed to the governor at C——, to ask his opinion. The answer was evasive. Dmitry was called a restless, ill-

advised man, who had, however, never yet done anything wrong. In spite of this, the governor did not advise any serious measure towards him; it would suffice, he said, to remove him from the province of O——.

"I have been waiting for the return of your excellency, with fullest trust in your sense of justice," said Dmitry, at last; "if you cannot grant my request at once, allow me, at least, to see my bride."

"This is perfectly impossible," answered the general resolutely; "I not only forbid your seeing any of the prisoners, I even order you to leave this town to-day. If you do not obey the consequences will fall on your head."

"I am not afraid, your excellency."

"Enough, Mr. Koretzky; do not insist; thank me rather for allowing you to depart. You may go wherever you like. I grant you this favour out of respect for your uncle, whom I knew intimately formerly. I won't believe that you side with ill-intentioned people. As for the person on whose behalf you intercede, you may depend upon my being as attentive and impartial to her as possible."

Dmitry was going to answer, but the clock struck eleven.

"No more, Mr. Koretzky; it is late, I must dismiss you."

The general rang the bell, and his aide-de-camp entered.

"I shan't be able to receive any more to-day," he said, with a wave of his hand towards Dmitry, to show him that the audience was at an end. "Your report is long to-day, is it?"

The aide-de-camp took a paper out of his portfolio, and Dmitry was obliged to withdraw. With the evening train he left O——, to return directly to Biälastolby.

CHAPTER XII.

DURING the first days of her arrest Nadia fell into a sort of dull despair. After her violent scene with Boroffsky she knew that there was no possible rescue for her. Before her was darkness—nothing but impenetrable darkness. She did not struggle against this all-pervading feeling, she simply shut her eyes to the fact, as people sometimes do in a dark room. No future existed to her, nothing but an endless present, in which one day would be exactly like the other. She let herself be carried down the stream like a drowning person whose strength is fast ebbing away. To all the questions put to her she answered quietly and indifferently, not even trying to defend herself. She did not want to believe in the possibility of a rescue, in order to crush every grain of hope. Why live on hoping for something which would never come? Better remain in a death-like moral swoon, cease to hope, to remember, and to think. Oh! if this could be done! if she could forget the past and erect a moral prison, in which all her thoughts would be shut up for

ever! Strange to say, she even ceased to think of Biälastolby and Dmitry, for she knew that if he stood before her mind's eye she would suffer a most awful heartache, and she wanted, above all, not to suffer. Why suffer? In every suffering there is a struggle, and this struggle would lead to nothing; there could never be a change for the better for her, so all her thoughts tended towards a moral suicide.

But this could not go on for long; a reaction must come sooner or later. It came after a few days. It is not easy to annihilate thought and will; it is not in the power of human beings to shake off the sense of time, and to triumph over it. Time will always conquer, with its endless patience. The subdued will rises sooner or later in revolt against a pitiless grief, and tries, though with hopeless, despairing efforts, to return to a calmer view of life. So it fared with Nadia. Her whole being suddenly revolted against the violence used towards her. Passionate, burning hatred awoke within her heart, not only against her persecutor, but against that society which showed itself so harsh and cruel towards her. What! she had been ready to return to it, to submit to all its exigencies, and this was her reward! If it could not discern the innocent from the guilty, then all must be wrong and unlawful within it, and those were right who wanted to crush it!

She did not even make an exception for the Koretzkys. She accused Dmitry and his mother,

for she could not believe in the utter hopelessness of their efforts. No, life was probably going on at Biälastolby as before; they were sorry for her, but Time would heal their wounds, and Dmitry would marry. What a miserable love that must be which the hand of Time can erase, and the wind of to-morrow scatter about like dust!

One morning the keeper who brought her her food told her, with a very important air, that four new prisoners had been brought in the day before—one girl, rather ugly, and three men. She tried in vain to learn their names; he would not tell anything, only adding that one of them was in the room adjoining hers.

Till now Nadia had never answered the efforts which her neighbours had made to converse with her; she would communicate with nobody on earth, not even with other prisoners. Nor had she made any acquaintances during the hour of her walk, the keepers watching severely over the prisoners. She had never met either Sacha or Neradovitch. The keeper who had promised to forward Sacha's letter had been changed, and the new one was a rather silent man. Little by little, however, he departed from his prudence, seeing how quiet Nadia was; besides, he was rather in love with her pretty face; so when she asked him about her sister, he told her that she had been transferred to another prison. This was a fresh grief to her. The presence of her sister, though they never

met, was yet a link between her and her relations. During the last days she had often thought of her childhood, and it almost seemed as if the old love to her former associates had re-awakened to new life within her. She forgot that one of these associates, her former teacher, was the chief author of her present misfortune. But Boroffsky's guilt was so awful in her eyes that the lesser crime of Neradovitch dwindled into nothing.

As soon as the keeper had left her, she hurried towards the partition wall of the cell and knocked at it. A voice answered her, which she recognised as that of Goldstein.

"Oh, so you are here, Nadeshda Sergeïevna," he answered, with a short laugh; "well, I am glad of it."

Without minding these offensive words, she questioned him about what had happened before his arrest.

"Why do you want to know? You are also under lock, though you don't belong to us. We were all arrested yesterday evening in my rooms—Toumanoff, Varvara, and Brushkoff. Much you care, I dare say."

Nadia now felt much nearer to these people than she had done before; the conviction that they were going to suffer the same condemnation drew them together. Yet Goldstein refused to answer her question.

"I won't have anything to do with you. You fancy you have got a new right to our esteem while you

are shut up here. But you won't remain here, depend upon it; you have too high protectors for that."

These scoffing words wounded Nadia deeply. She forgot that there was a time when she had answered her former associates just as coldly and proudly.

In the afternoon she met Varvara Pokrovsky in her walk. Profiting by a moment when the two keepers were talking together, she went up to her, offering to shake hands with her, but Varvara refused.

"We are prisoners as well as you, Miss Olsheffsky," she answered coldly, "yet I won't have anything to do with traitors."

When she re-entered her room, the keeper gave her a letter. It was from Dmitry. There was no stamp on it; he had delivered it himself on the day he left town.

"What day of the month is it to-day?" she asked of the keeper.

"The 15th of October," he answered, on leaving the room.

The 15th of October! The day fixed on for her marriage! She had already spent twelve whole days in prison. How long, how torturing they had been! and yet how infinitely small compared to the number of days awaiting her!

The letter was dated the 8th of October. For a whole week the director of the prison had been revolving in his mind whether it ought to be delivered or not; but Boroffsky had decided the question for

him. Paltry persecutions were not in his line, and the old current of love which still mixed with his avenging cruelty towards the young girl did not allow him to torment her uselessly. He even sent the order that all her letters were to be handed unread to her; it almost seemed that he wished to show her a sort of generosity.

Nadia read her letter two or three times. Dmitry did his best to comfort her. He assured her over and over that all would be well; yet the letter breathed an almost hopeless grief. He even seemed more utterly cast down than she was herself. To lose the object of an ardent love, and to be obliged to confess the impossibility of saving her, is a hundred times worse than being swallowed up oneself in the abyss of misfortune. This echo of another's grief melted the harshness of her own, and she burst into a storm of passionate sobbings. She had doubted Dmitry's love for her; these doubts had utterly crushed her; and now his loving voice reached her ear, and a ray of hope lit up the darkness of her mind. She asked permission to write to Koretzky, declaring herself ready to submit her letter to the chief authority of the prison. How great was her joy on hearing that the attorney-general had ordered her correspondence to be free from all official control!

She sat down to write to Dmitry at once. This possibility of communicating with him inspired her with the hope of a brighter future, and she filled page

after page, glowing with the re-awakening sense of youth and life. But suddenly she stopped, her pen dropped from her fingers; to renew her ties with Biälastolby would certainly be the greatest comfort to her; but would it not be full of danger for the Koretzkys? Nadia did not doubt any longer that Dmitry would never swerve in his love and devotion to her; he would mourn over her as a dead love for years and years. But then, death, however awful, sets a man free; while she in her prison would bind him with indissoluble ties! Had she the right to do this? He was in no way guilty. Ought he to suffer because his love was given to a girl weighed down by the responsibility of her past? No; she would break with him, save him through this sacrifice of herself. She felt almost happy at the idea of doing something for another, of giving up this only ray of joy and hope in her life. She thought she knew now why this dreadful change had taken place in her existence: she had always been looking out for opportunities to sacrifice herself for others. Now it had come, she was to sacrifice herself, not to mankind in general, but to *one* family, the same who had saved her as she stood alone in the world. She tore up her letter, and seizing her pen, began to write as if a secret voice had been whispering in her ear what she had to write. Her letter was as follows:—

"How can I tell you, my beloved Mitia, what deep sense of joy your letter gave me! Yet it made me

feel very sorry, too, for I saw that, however much you tried to comfort me, you are perfectly broken-hearted yourself. My poor friend, this is wrong, and not at all like your own dear self. I am convinced you did all you could to free me, and it would be wrong of me to say I should not care to be free; but this is what I want to tell you quite candidly. It is more than probable that you won't succeed in delivering me, and I think we ought to prepare ourselves for this emergency, and give up all hope of being again reunited. If we are wrong, so much the better. We shall be spared awful delusions.

"This is what I want to ask of you, my beloved friend. Do not write to me any more; try and forget me. I know it will be hard, almost impossible; yet you must accustom yourself to the idea that we are not to belong to one another. You will think I write this in a fit of exasperation; but it is not so, Dmitry. I was in despair, but I have now peace and joy, and know that all is for the best. It is better for us not to meet again during this time of probation. Let us look truth in the face, and not fear it. We are parted for ever. One does not leave prison as one enters it: eyes long accustomed to darkness can't look at the sun. Prison and justice-court make you unfit for life. You would not disown me on this account, I know, yet every effort of yours would only add to my sufferings, while I might, perhaps, find peace of mind, knowing you free and happy. There-

fore I give you back your word. No; I even beg you to take it back. The former Nadia does not exist any more, will never exist again. I don't ask you to seek another wedded happiness,—this thought would only torture you,—but ours is at an end. How I enjoyed the idea of passing through life hand in hand with you, heart and mind closely united; for we have what so few people possess—perfect sympathy! Now that we are parted, the thought of it fills my heart with unspeakable bliss! Oh, Dmitry, how happy we might have been!

"Be of good cheer, my beloved one, and, above all, do not give up the work which we were to have done together. Personal sufferings cannot exempt us from our duties. No one, not even the greatest wretch, ought to live idle and without interest. My duty consists in not losing my courage, and I try to fulfil it. The first days were awful; I confess it; but now exasperation and wickedness have left me, I trust. You see that even for me the little word 'trust' exists still. If ever I leave this place, I hope to have conquered all irritation, and thus fulfilled a good work, though not the one I dreamt of; but in order to attain this, it will be necessary to part from one another. I shall not write to you again.

"Good-bye, my dearest, my best beloved; do not try to shake my resolution, but remember that if our earthly ties are broken, there are other bonds between us which are indissoluble. Life is short; grief and

sufferings pass away; eternity is long. I now believe in these truths, and thank you for teaching them to me.

"I have much more to tell you, but how express in words what ought to have filled both our lives! Let me only thank you a thousand times for the month we spent together. But for you, I regret nothing on earth. Thank your mother and brother also. Poor auntie! how I pity her! Why did I ever enter your house, and cause you so much grief? But no, Dmitry, this is not true; you know I do not regret having lived with your family. Forgive me; forgive all. Kiss dear mamma, and tell Tomiline that I always think of him with gratitude.

"And this is all, Dmitry. Even here, on the paper, I can't take leave of you; it is sad, oh! how sad to part. Yet it must be. But, Dmitry, remember that whatever happens, how many years I may be doomed to pass here, your imprisoned Nadia will never cease to pray for you and yours, and beseech God that her own great misfortune may not throw a shadow on your own path in life. Good-bye! good-bye.

"Your NADIA."

CHAPTER XIII.

NADIA'S letter did not find Dmitry at Biälastolby; he had gone to Petersburg to intercede for her. He had not many powerful friends, yet he intended to try to interest those for her who might influence her destiny. First of all, he went to his uncle, Peter Nicolaïevitch. But this was an utter failure. The old man refused to help him in a very resolute way.

"You want me to intercede for that girl because you happen to admire her! How absurd! If you had asked my opinion at Biälastolby, I should have told you that she is a Nihilist. They were perfectly right to shut her up. And you, my dear fellow, have done nothing but heap shame on your father's name. You gave up service, and spoilt all your business in the country. Oh! I heard pretty things of you from your governor. He spent some days here. And now you want to marry a Nihilist! Charming, indeed! But I shan't have anything to do with you, after this, I tell you; I am your uncle no longer."

"I never had the feeling of your being my uncle," said Dmitry coldly, and rising.

"What!" cried Peter Nicolaïevitch; but Dmitry

had already left the room. "The insolent boy!" he added, remembering how his inferiors used to tremble before him.

After this Dmitry drove to Count Sokolnitzky, but here he was told that the Count was abroad, and would not return before New Year's Day.

"He is at Nice, with the young Count," explained the old porter. "They have taken a villa together with Elena Michaïlovna Ordinzoff. Shall I give you their address?"

Dmitry accepted, though he hardly intended to use it. Through his uncle's denial and the Count's absence, he had lost that magical key which would open the way to the highest authorities. He did not, however, lose courage entirely. He remembered that a former friend of his, named Gostomisloff, served in the department which could be the most useful to him. He was a handsome man, with regular features, a straight nose, and a pair of eyes which expressed gaiety and good-nature. He received Dmitry with hearty pleasure, without the slightest condescension, and promised to procure him an interview with the minister.

"You have not come to ask a favour on your own behalf; that's the most important thing," he added, with a smile.

"You seem to think that the Gospel saying about the lost sheep in the flock being the dearest is realized by me?"

"Of course, of course," laughed Gostomisloff.

And he was as good as his word: after five days he wrote to him that the minister would receive him in audience.

The conversation was in French, which is the highest proof of Russian courteousness. The minister listened for ten minutes to Dmitry's explanations, and seemed perfectly convinced of the truth of his assertions.

"Je vous promets de faire tout ce qui sera possible," he concluded, holding out his hand to Dmitry.

When Gostomisloff heard the details of this interview he did not seem very convinced of ultimate success. He proposed to Dmitry to give him a few words of recommendation to a friend of his in another influential department. This was a young aide-de-camp, in a dark-blue uniform, who received Dmitry with a great deal of self-importance.

"Please to return in a week," he said, holding out his soft, perfumed hand. "I may be able then, perhaps, to give you a definite answer.

On the same day he received Nadia's letter, which had been forwarded to him from Biälastolby. It was dreadful to him to witness the perfect renunciation of life and its joys which her words breathed. His resolution to save her at any cost grew stronger and stronger. However faint his chance of success, yet he would not give up the hope of making her his wife. The sweet way in which she asked him to give her

up roused his indignation. How could she talk thus! Condemned, banished, she would always remain the only love of his heart. He had not written to her after his failure with the general at O——, but now that things looked a little brighter he sent her news every day. She did not answer him, though he besought her in every letter to break this silence.

One day passed after the other. Dmitry went daily to the minister to inquire after the state of things, and every time he fancied he was treated with a little more coolness. Even the aide-de-camp began to show signs of impatience.

"You won't understand that the examination is still going on," he said, a little sharply, as Dmitry came for the third time. "You must have a little patience, Mr. Koretzky."

After this he grew still more inaccessible. Dmitry could not understand this change in his behaviour. Once, after a useless visit, he thought he recognised Boroffsky in the tall gentleman who came out from the minister, and disappeared quickly in a carriage waiting at the foot of the stairs; but his fur collar having been raised over his ears he had not been able to see him quite distinctly. He returned once more to his friend Gostomisloff, but he only advised him to be a little more quiet, or he would spoil the whole business.

"We have done what we could," he said, straighten-

ing himself and looking rather formidable. "I wash my hands of the whole affair, and advise you to wait patiently."

He turned towards one of the clerks to give him some directions.

"*A propos*," he said, after having dismissed the clerk, "I hear you had some difficulty at O—— with the attorney-general Boroffsky. The minister knows all about it, and will hardly consent to do anything for you. You've spoilt your affair yourself."

"Ah! I understand; Boroffsky is here!" exclaimed Dmitry, remembering having seen him on the stairs of the ministry. He knew now that there was no hope for him any more.

Peter Nicolaïevitch, on his side, did what he could to hurt Dmitry. He once happened to meet a great dignitary, in whose hands lay the final issue of the trial.

"Tell me, please," said the dignitary, "if that's not a relation of yours, that young man who stirs himself so much on behalf of the girl Olsheffsky, arrested not long ago at O——?"

"Yes; a distant one, rather," he answered, somewhat embarrassed; "but I never felt any interest about him. Believe me, I have broken entirely with him now. He served in my department, left service, —Heaven knows why,—made the acquaintance of very suspicious persons, and even wanted to marry one of them—a Miss Marsheffsky, or Kolsheffsky

—the one you mentioned just now. In a word, he is a most ill-advised person."

"Oh! is it so?" laughed the dignitary, dropping the subject.

Dmitry was soon convinced that the change which he was experiencing had been caused by Boroffsky. He had often gone in vain to the ministry, when he received one morning the order to present himself there. The handsome aide-de-camp received him.

"It is not long since the examination at O—— brought some very unpleasant news to the surface about your own headstrong doings in the country," he said, in a voice as if reciting a prayer. "It seems you tried to right yourself, and had, moreover, appointed a very dubious character, a certain Brushkoff, as schoolmaster on your estate. Afterwards you helped this Brushkoff and a certain Neradovitch to hide under assumed names, and thus baffled the pursuit of the police. At the elections at C—— you opposed the president, and lastly, at O——, you allowed yourself to insult the attorney-general in an unheard-of way."

Dmitry tried in vain to interrupt this flow of words and to defend himself. He was stopped with such a commanding air that he was obliged to submit and listen in silence. At last the aide-de-camp told him that he was ordered to leave the capital at once, and to remain in the government of C——, to be placed there under the supervision of the police.

CHAPTER XIV.

SEVERAL months had elapsed. Spring, so peculiar on the border of the Neva, so unlike the real spring, was drawing near. The streets were still covered with snow, but its muddy, greyish surface was quickly changing into rivulets. Snowflakes were still glistening, like diamonds, on the walls of the houses; while damp, dark spots began to show here and there, giving them the look of a spotted dress. The icicles drooping from the roofs were shedding tears over the approaching end of the winter season. The larks had not yet made their appearance, but little sparrows and bristling chaffinches were chirping and bustling on the naked branches in the gardens, more to warm themselves than because they wished to enjoy the pleasures of spring. The cloudy sky was lit up by a stray sun-ray, which only seemed the warmer and brighter for its rarity. The inhabitants of Petersburg, who were not spoilt by their northern climate, hurried out into the streets as soon as the March sun deigned to appear, giving to the capital a character of liveliness and

gaiety which was not in accordance with the solemnity of the first days of Lent.

On a clear day in March a sledge dashed up to the entrance door of an old house on the English quay, creaking noisily on the bare stones of the pavement. A young man, wrapt in a fur coat, a fur cap on his head, sprang out of it. These precautions against cold stamped him as a provincial—the youths in the capital had already worn spring coats for several days. He rang the door bell, which was answered by a stout Swiss in livery, a large cane with a flat head in his hand.

"Is the Count at home?" asked the young man, looking anxiously about him.

"Yes; but his excellency may be occupied, for aught I know," answered the Swiss good-naturedly. "Have you something particular to say to him?"

Although he had served in the house of Count Sokolnitzky for more than twenty years, he had never ceased to treat the various petitioners, who presented themselves in great numbers, in a very off-hand way. This young man did not make any exception to the rule. He left him standing in the hall, and went up to an old man in a long coat, who was passing just at that moment. It was the butler.

"Ivan Fedovitsh! do you know whether the Count wants the petitioners to be announced to-day? Here's one more asking for him."

"There are no special orders given for to-day."

Though the Count had ceased long ago to occupy an official post, he enjoyed a great influence in the highest circles, and was therefore always besieged by numerous petitioners. He was fond of receiving them, and felt flattered at their evident belief in his omnipotence. He was very often deceived, as a matter of course, but he belonged to those happy natures who never believe in deceit, and was therefore less easily mortified than others when he happened to be taken in.

Volodia grew quite exasperated at this reception. He now stepped forward, and said,—

"Please to tell the Count that Vladimir Alexandrovitch Koretzky, marshal of noblesse for the district of C——, has come to see him on important business; here is a letter from my brother Dmitry, which you can give him."

The butler walked off, and Volodia began to look about him, examining the large hall of the old mansion. It was one of those big edifices in which were vast monumental stairs, large, empty ball-rooms, where no fire had burnt for twenty years, and splendid ceilings and stuccoed walls, quickly decaying and mouldering away. These houses are getting rarer every day in Petersburg, yet they ought to be carefully kept in order, as memorials of bygone days and witnesses of a society which is quickly disappearing.

Volodia's heart sank within him when he thought that he would have to appear in a few minutes before the Count, towards whom he had behaved like an insolent schoolboy last summer at Nikolsky. The whole fate of his family now depended upon this man—he was trustee to Jenny, and could therefore decide her fate just as he liked. But, beside these personal motives, true respect filled his heart for this old man, whom he had called a scarecrow a few months ago. Much had changed in Volodia's life since we saw him last. At the elections which had taken place in December he had conquered Ukhoff without any difficulty, and with this new position his views and convictions had also undergone a happy change; what had formerly provoked his merciless raillery was now listened to with reverence by him, and though marshal of noblesse he moved as freely as he had done in his youthful schooldays.

"Is it long since the Count returned from abroad?" he asked suddenly of the Swiss.

"About a month."

"And did Elena Michaïlovna return with him?"

Volodia having arrived the day before had not yet had time to learn anything about the Ordinzoffs' proceedings. He blushed slightly as he put this question.

"Her excellency came in the same train as the Count," answered the Swiss, glancing wonderingly at the young man, and revolving in his mind whether

this could be a real gentleman who questioned the servants in this way.

"His excellency asks you to step into his room," said the butler, appearing at the door.

Volodia followed him with a little trepidation. The Count's study was a large room, furnished with comfort as well as luxury. The walls were covered with sketches of the Caucasus, given to him during his military career, and with portraits of his friends and comrades, most of them already dead. The Count was not alone. Volodia almost stumbled over Boris Sokolnitzky as he entered the room. The young Count was radiant with health, and had again the Imperial initials on his new uniform as an aide-de-camp. He held out his hand to Volodia with a beaming smile.

"I congratulate you," he said, "though I am not exactly your colleague any longer; I have ceased to be marshal of noblesse, you see. J'ai fait ma soumission."

The gaiety of Boris must be attributed to a particularly happy disposition, for he had just had a very unpleasant quarrel with his father, having been obliged to confess to him that the revenues of his own estate were perfectly insufficient for his wants, the more so as he had lost large sums at the club. The Count listened with that somewhat contemptuous calmness with which he always listened to money questions.

"A votre âge j'avais déjà gagné la croix, et vous ne savez que perdre au baccarat," he said.

To give him a yearly allowance out of his own revenues he flatly refused.

"Then nothing remains for me but to marry a rich girl," said Boris. "I really wonder you do not help me a little to get that pretty girl whom you have, so to say, on your hands."

But the old man would not hear anything of this; it was not the first time that his son had hinted at the possibility of his marrying Jenny, and this exasperated him.

"Don't mention this to me," he cried angrily; "I should use my rights as trustee to get you a rich wife! Vous devriez rougir de me proposer une pareille ignominie."

This conversation was cut short by the butler's appearing to announce Volodia. As soon as the Count had read Dmitry's letter, he ordered the young man to be introduced. He had quite forgotten Volodia's senseless sallies at Nikolsky, for he never dwelt long on paltry things, especially when these things concerned himself personally. Dmitry had sent his brother to him on an important mission, and he prepared to listen to him with that same courteousness with which he listened to every petitioner.

"Your brother writes that you will tell me all the details of the unpleasant incident with your cousin; he counts upon my being of use to him in this affair.

I shall certainly be delighted; though I know him but slightly, I respect him very sincerely."

Volodia listened attentively to this speech, which the Count delivered standing.

"My brother was very unwilling to trouble your excellency, most certainly. But he thought—most important circumstances——"

The Count attributed Volodia's shyness to his unwillingness to talk before a third person, so raising his eyebrows, he glanced at his son, who turned on his heels and left the room.

"Please sit down; I'll listen to you."

Volodia first mentioned the circumstances under which Nadia had entered their family, and then told of her arrest at O——; but his shyness made him talk very incoherently—now breaking suddenly off, now repeating details which he had already given. The Count listened with strained attention, sometimes bowing his head as if in assent. On hearing the details of the arrest, he exclaimed,—

"What! and she has been in prison since then? Impossible!"

"She is now in the fortress."

"And why was this mistake not cleared up before?"

Volodia told of Dmitry's journey to O——, and of Boroffsky's enigmatical behaviour. Though Dmitry had asked him not to mention his sharp

encounter with the attorney-general, he could not pass it over in silence.

"Mais j'en aurai fait autant! c'est une infamie!" cried the old man. "He must be a cousin of Prince Paul Dmitrovitch Boroffsky. Yes, I know; I met him somewhere. Not a very nice man. But your brother ought to have addressed himself to the military authorities; the general is charming."

Volodia told him how all Dmitry's efforts had led to nothing. "Now he is himself banished, and shut up in his district."

The Count started up; a youthful fire burned in his dim eyes.

"What! your brother! But he does not mention it. Why did he not write long ago? I should have written to every one on his behalf."

Volodia told how Dmitry had been at two departments, but without the slightest success.

"Thank God," cried the Count, in an excited voice, "there is a power higher than these gentlemen; là on ne se retranche jamais derrière des formalités."

"We trust you will help us," said Volodia warmly.

All trace of official dignity had vanished from the Count's manner, and he held out his hand to the young man, though he very rarely shook hands with any one. Volodia got up, feeling that the audience was at an end.

"Are you here for long?" asked the Count, after Volodia had bowed to him.

"I don't know exactly," he answered shyly; "there is nothing decided as yet."

"Avez-vous été chez ma nièce?" again asked the Count, not knowing that Elena had quarrelled with the Koretzkys.

Volodia, still more embarrassed, murmured something about not having the courage to call upon her after so short an acquaintance in the country.

"Do go," said the Count, thus cutting short his somewhat confused explanations; "she will be delighted, I have no doubt."

Volodia wondered very much at these last words. Did an unexpected way offer itself to him? Jenny's prolonged stay abroad, and Boris's having lived in the same villa with her, had made him feel very wretched, and somewhat shaken his trust in her.

He was so taken up with these thoughts that he did not observe that a carriage stopped before the entrance just as he walked out of the door. A footman jumped down from the box, and hurried up to the carriage window, while one of the ladies bent out of it to say something to him. Her eyes immediately caught sight of Volodia's figure, and there must have been some great attractive power in them, for his eyes were equally drawn on to her face. The blood rushed hotly to his brow. It was Jenny's sweet face which he had seen. He started forward, as if to go to her, but stopped just as suddenly.

The poor boy had suffered a great deal since he

had got Jenny's first letter from Biarritz. He had answered it at once, and three weeks passed before he got another one. She wrote from Nice, where they had settled for the whole autumn, and a sort of wild delight pervaded the tenour of these lines. The new startling impressions of the South seemed to have turned her head; its sun was reflected in all her thoughts, but its bright rays did not dispel the darkness which filled Volodia's heart. He did not understand that this full enjoyment of life was a part of her whole being; he felt jealous of nature itself. Later he had heard that Elena held open house at Nice, and that Jenny delighted in the bright society of the Mediterranean capital. His imagination showed him the young girl surrounded by crowds of adorers, composed of those hair-brained fops who are to be found in great quantities in this cosmopolitan town. She never mentioned her return to Russia; and when a friend of his, who also spent the winter at Nice, called Elena Michaïlovna the chief attraction of all the balls there, poor Volodia felt entirely crushed.

Elena was indeed greatly changed. She had thrown off the rigidity which had characterized her former years, and seemed only intent upon indemnifying herself for the dull time of her early youth. What was passing within her soul during these revellings would be difficult to say. At Nice people talked a great deal about her and an Italian prince,

who bore the endless title of a castle which had long ceased to exist; and the correspondent of Volodia, when hinting at these rumours, treated them as facts, without much minding what he said.

"Poor Jenny!" exclaimed the young man, "to live in such surroundings! How can I manage to get her away from them?"

His letter, without mentioning these facts, breathed a great deal of exasperation, and was full of reproaches. Jenny felt deeply hurt, and ceased to write. This little cloud on her horizon pained her very much; but then Nice was so charming. She had become acquainted with so many delightful English girls, her guardian, the old Count, who had joined them, was so sweet and good to her, that she could not but enjoy herself in the artificial, wintry summer of this blooming Nice. It is true Boris also lived in their villa, and his presence was not particularly agreeable to her; but then he behaved so nicely that she made her peace with him after a few days.

"The worse for Volodia," she thought, "if he must do without my letters. Why did he behave in such a silly way? I am innocent of it."

Volodia, in the meantime, grew more and more low-spirited. He wrote several times to her without getting an answer. He knew that Boris was living in the same house with her, and this drove him to despair. He considered her as lost to him, though an inward voice did not cease to protest against this

supposed treachery. When he went to Petersburg, and pictured their first meeting to himself, he thought he would be very angry with her. But now that she was there, three paces from him, turning her lovely head towards him, his long-nourished anger vanished, and left nothing behind but embarrassment.

The footman, who had been listening attentively to her orders, now raised his hat and hurried upstairs.

"Vladimir Alexandrovitch, how do you do?" asked Jenny, with a gay laugh, for his tall figure, remaining irresolutely on the top of the stairs, looked so ridiculous that her innate gaiety appeared even at their first meeting. He approached her and pressed her offered hand firmly. Miss Finch bowed smilingly to him from the depth of the carriage.

"You are angry with me, I think; but tell me, please, why. I rather think I have the right to be angry."

But Jenny did not feel quite sure of her right, and neither in her face nor in her manner was there that rigid coldness with which she had intended to meet him; she had been taken quite unawares by this meeting, and all the sharp words she had prepared were forgotten.

"I am not angry, Eugenia Alexandrovna; on the contrary, I am perfectly delighted! Oh, if you knew what I have suffered during your absence!"

The mocking expression of her eyes vanished, but

she answered him gaily, for she felt that a pathetic scene in the street would be out of place.

"You ought to thank me for my letters; you really did not deserve them," she said reproachfully.

"Letters that I did not receive for five whole months," he answered, without minding her gay tone. "I won't reproach you, Eugenia Alexandrovna." He felt it perfectly impossible to call her Jenny, as of old. "Our time is short; we must use it. You sent up to ask if your guardian receives, did you not?"

He talked solemnly, in a trembling voice, while his face expressed a deep joy, but at the same time a sort of awe of her.

"Yes; why should I not?" she asked, wondering at the solemnity of his voice; "he is so good to me. But you have also been to see him, have you not?"

"To talk of Nadia with him. You know all, I suppose?"

"Yes; poor, poor Dmitry Alexandrovitch."

"All our hopes are concentrated on the Count," said Volodia pensively; "I respect him greatly. He is upon our side, if I may still use the word 'our.'"

There was a ring of distrust in his voice, but Jenny seemed perfectly heedless of it; she only chafed at his losing their precious time with these reproaches, and hardly knew what to say.

"You say the Count is for us, and yet you don't want me to go and see him!"

"But he is not alone in his house," said Volodia imprudently.

A hot flush mounted to her brow. She felt vexed at the distrust his words conveyed, and tears of indignation filled her eyes.

"How can you talk thus after all that happened at Biälastolby last year?" she said, in a quivering voice.

"You have not forgotten what you said then?" he exclaimed.

Her heart melted towards him.

"I am the same; you alone are altered." He made a gesture as if to interrupt her, but she went on steadily. "What you said just now about the Count is true: he always sides with us, only he does not know all as yet."

"Will you tell him?"

"I'll speak when it is necessary; perhaps very soon."

"But Elena Michaïl——"

Volodia had no time to finish, for Boris appeared at the head of the stairs, followed by the footman. He had seen the lively conversation of the two young people from the window, and as it did not please him very much, he snatched up his hat, put on his overcoat, and hurried downstairs.

"Oh, my dear cousin!" he exclaimed, "I had no idea you were here. Papa is at home. He will be delighted. May I help you?"

He opened the door, smiling askance at Volodia; but this time his smile was not as good-natured as in his father's study. "Wait a little," it seemed to say; "I'll teach you manners, if you intend to go on as at Nikolsky."

"His excellency is at home," said the footman, behind the young Count.

Jenny put her small foot on the step, and, without minding the proffered hand, sprang lightly out of the carriage.

"Da svidania, Vladimir Alexandrovitch," she said, with a caressing glance at Volodia; "au revoir et bonne promenade," she added, a little mockingly, holding out her small hand in the long Swedish glove to her cousin.

Boris asked Volodia if he would accompany him, though he felt somewhat worried at his sudden dismissal; at any rate, he thought there would be no harm to convince himself how far the preceding conversation had raised his rival's hope. This was easily done, for Volodia had not yet learned to feign, and there was something untold between him and Jenny which prevented him from showing that intoxication of the heart which is so easy to discern in young people's eyes. Boris felt pacified, and left him at the next turning, after having taken the resolution of barring him the way to Elena's house.

On the following day, about four o'clock in the afternoon, Volodia resolved to follow the Count's

advice, and to pay a visit to the Ordinzoffs. He had, however, hardly taken a few steps on the Gagarine Quay before he met Elena's carriage, in which she was sitting herself, with Jenny and two young men, one of whom was Boris. He was talking very eagerly to her, and was evidently amusing her. In the other he recognized Boroffsky. The carriage was passing very slowly, quite close to the trottoir. Volodia took off his hat, but Elena looked away in order to avoid his gaze, while Jenny did not see him.

Volodia blushed furiously, and returned at once to his hotel. This small circumstance showed him the greatness of the danger. "She made a fool of me yesterday," he thought, "just as she did last year at Nikolsky, and I was stupid enough to believe her. Who can tell if she is not now laughing at me with this empty-headed aide-de-camp? To call upon them would only be to lower myself. They won't know me; that's clear as day!"

His anger with Jenny was perfectly senseless. Her innocent gaiety was the result of her conversation with her guardian. She had told him all, and found a ready confederate in him. The old man was of a somewhat romantic disposition, and delighted in the part which she allotted to him. The first bad impression which Volodia had made on him had been wiped away long ago, and Jenny's eloquence was not put to a too heavy test. He promised to talk to her step-mother.

"Only I think, Jenny darling, you might wait a little; vous n'avez pas dix-sept ans, mon enfant."

Jenny left him in the wildest of spirits, but Volodia did not know this, of course, and gave himself up entirely to the darkest thoughts of hatred and vengeance.

But the news which awaited him at the hotel made him forget all about Jenny. The porter handed him a telegram, which he opened rather indifferently. On reading it his face quickly changed, and what had seemed a most distressing grief a moment before now paled and disappeared before this new misfortune. The telegram was as follows:—

"To Mr. Koretzky, Hôtel Demuth, Petersburg.

"Mamma dangerously ill; come at once.

"Dmitry."

That same evening Volodia left for Moscow by the express.

CHAPTER XV.

THE numerous misfortunes which had befallen the Koretzky family had done no harm to Anna Grigorievna. Dmitry even rejoiced at seeing her look so much better; the fit of anger she had experienced when her home was searched seemed to have awakened all her former energy. She was not satisfied with the courteous letter of excuses sent by the governor, but insisted upon herself defending the outraged honour of her house; she sent a detailed complaint of the last events, written in glowing colours, to the minister at Petersburg, and even talked of going there herself.

But the arrest of Nadia and the departure of Dmitry obliged her to remain at Biälastolby, and made her almost forget all about the offence shown to her. As so often happens, the greater offence blotted out the smaller one. She now only remembered how dear Nadia was to her, and would have sacrificed, not only her remaining strength, but even her much-prized independence, if she could have rescued her in this way.

When Dmitry returned from O—— he was a

broken-hearted man—his hair was beginning to turn grey. His mother saw this, but she knew that tears were of no avail here, and did her best to comfort him, only weeping in her solitude over their common grief. When he resolved to go to Petersburg, she wished to accompany him, but he would not hear of it. Even when he returned thence in a sort of banishment she kept up her courage; she went downstairs to receive him, pressed him silently in her arms, and two big tears rolled slowly down her wrinkled cheeks. She wanted to convince her sons that it would be possible to take up their old life again, and detach themselves slowly from those dreams of happiness which had once seemed so near. Servants and friends ought not to know anything of all the changes that had taken place; the peasants, above all, must not swerve in their obedience to Dmitry. She even tried to revive the old interest he had felt in his rural occupations. But Dmitry was incapable even of a transient occupation. His whole life, the present and the future, hung on one thread—Nadia's trial. He kept up appearances, and seemed to be managing the estate, but in reality he had passed all off to his younger brother.

This young man was the only one who throve in the Koretzky family. He was deeply sorry for his brother, as a matter of course, but he never felt entirely crushed with anything. His uneasiness about Jenny sometimes occasioned him a sleepless

night, but the broad daylight dispersed his gloomy thoughts, for in his very heart he never believed in her treason. Her lovely face smiled upon him at the very moment when he felt most wretched; and thus his life passed amidst all these fluctuations, which seemed to lend a new charm to it. The cares that weighed on him did not prevent his accepting the candidateship of a marshal of noblesse; and while Dmitry sued in vain for justice in the capital, his election was carried victoriously through.

But this success of her younger son did not give any pleasure to Anna Grigorievna; on the contrary, it rather vexed her. The difference between the fate of the two brothers struck her as unjust; it almost seemed to her that Volodia had robbed Dmitry of a part of his happiness.

"Really," she said to Tomiline, who wanted to comfort her, "I can't understand why Volodia succeeds in all that he undertakes, while poor Mitia" —and she added inwardly, "who is so much cleverer and more independent" — "knows nothing but failure."

The winter months passed slowly and gloomily. Intellectual life slumbered at Biälastolby, just as the rich black earth slumbered under its dense snow-cover. The only thing which sustained Dmitry was watching the moral strength of his mother; but even this was a trembling joy, for how long would this tension last which sustained her and made her equal

to all emergencies? Her sons often consulted Tomiline, wanting to hear his opinion about her. But he remained silent, for he considered the future under very gloomy colours, and foresaw that the spring of her life would snap asunder very quickly.

As soon as the news of Count Sokolnitzky's return to Petersburg reached Biälastolby, it was settled that Volodia was to go to town and ask the old man for his help. After his first interview with him he sent a telegram to Dmitry, giving him a bright and hopeful account of the general's opinion. But even this did not raise Dmitry's spirits. Anna Grigorievna had returned from her walk, feeling very unwell, and had gone to lie down.

"I feel rather tired," she said; "the spring air is always trying. I'll get up in the evening, and shall be quite well in a few hours."

She refused to see the doctor. But when the evening came, and she could not get up, feeling hot and out of breath, Dmitry sent for him, in spite of her protestations. He found all the signs of inflammation of the lungs, great weakness, hardly perceptible pulse, and a most violent fever. Her consciousness, however, was quite clear, and she listened attentively to his words.

"Dmitry," she said, calling her son to her bed, as soon as the physician had left the room, "do not let me die without receiving the communion; promise me."

"But, mamma, the doctor did not say anything like this."

Anna Grigorievna shook her head.

"Mitia," she said, "I am very sorry to leave you just now, yet God's will be done."

The doctor watched the whole night at her bedside with Dmitry. She was very quiet, though she could not sleep. In the dim light of the night-lamp her features looked strangely wan and thin, as if this sleepless, feverish night had suddenly altered them. Her strength was fast ebbing away; she had struggled on towards perfect annihilation, and the illness conquered her at once.

On the ensuing day Dmitry telegraphed to his brother, though the doctor would not admit of any danger.

She did not suffer very much. Her breath came very short, but a great peace pervaded her whole being; she reclined, as pale as wax, on her snowy pillow. There was no death struggle at all; life was simply going to stop. She was thinking of far, by-gone days, and their sweet echo wafted joyousness into her heart. She did not speak much, but she called Dmitry very often to her side, kissed his forehead, and murmured tender words in his ear.

"Where is Volodia?" she asked; "I should like to bless him once more."

Dmitry told her that he was expected back hourly,

and then put her in mind of her wish to receive the communion.

"Thank you, dearest; is it time?"

She looked straight into his eyes. Dmitry bent his head, and sent for Father Sosima. Her confession was short; she did not feel strong enough for a long talk, and what could she say to a man like Father Sosima? He was a shallow-brained fellow, but he was fond of her, and the quivering voice in which he gave her the absolution and the blessing did her, perhaps, more good than the most elaborate words of comfort could have done.

After the communion she grew very calm, and talked a great deal about Nadia, whom she had rather dreaded to mention till now.

"How sorry I am not to be able to take leave of her; I should like to have kissed her once more, and asked her forgiveness. I offended her so often in my thoughts. Write and tell her that I bless her just as if she were my own daughter."

A short silence ensued.

"I won't believe that you are not to see Nadia again," she went on; "I should not die in peace if I did not feel convinced of your marrying each other."

Volodia came in the evening. He found his mother still alive. Though Dmitry's telegram had frightened him, yet he did not believe in any real danger; a presentiment of evil never took root in

Volodia's mind. And it was not until he sprang out of the tarantass and saw Terenty's face—old servants always have a particular look when the end of their masters is drawing near—that he knew the truth. His heart gave a great throb, and tears welled up into his eyes. He started forward as his brother came downstairs, crying,—

"Is there really no hope?"

"Don't speak so loud; she is sleeping," answered Dmitry.

Volodia cried so passionately when they took him into his mother's room, that they were obliged to lead him away, after she had touched his cheeks with her trembling lips, and made the sign of the cross three times on his brow.

The bright March sun was pouring its rays into the room when Dmitry closed his mother's eyes. Her last hours had been very quiet, and no one knew exactly when her soul passed into the eternal rest.

Tomiline arrived on the following day, and took the management of the funeral into his hands, for Dmitry felt unequal to the task, and Volodia gave himself up to such a noisy, restless grief that no help was to be expected of him. Numerous guests came to assist at the burial service, even such as had never visited formerly at Biälastolby. There are people who never miss an opportunity of assisting at a burial, as if delighted to see the interior of a house where they have never been received during its master's

lifetime. Spring was lavishly throwing all its young treasures over the gardens and woods at Biälastolby, but here in the house, whence its mistress had been carried away, after having ruled it for forty years, even these bright sun-rays were unable to call forth any tokens of gladness. Life was carried on in a dull, listless way, behind those sun-flooded windows, an empty life, without aim or support.

Volodia tried to comfort his brother with the good news he had brought from Petersburg, for the young man already experienced the wish to look forward to better days, and wanted to communicate the same hopefulness to Dmitry.

"Why give myself up to hopes that might prove false?" he said listlessly. "Count Sokolnitzky is not almighty."

And Dmitry proved right, after all. A fortnight after his mother's death, he received a letter from the Count, telling him of his entire failure. The letter was written in Russian, in a heavy, business-like tone. He did not mention Anna Grigorievna's death, having not yet heard of it.

"I can't compare all the difficulties I met with except to the doings of evil powers." Thus he concluded his letter: "I met with courteousness everywhere; but was told wherever I turned that the trial must have its way, and that it was impossible to foresee the judgment. Among the Cabinet Ministers I found a strong current of prejudices against you;

whence they come I don't know. There are things going on here to which people of my age have no key any longer. But I don't give up hope; whenever I have resolved upon looking for justice I have succeeded.

"With my best regards,

"COUNT SOKOLNITZKY."

CHAPTER XVI.

A WHOLE year had passed since Anna Grigorievna's death. In Petersburg spring was again near at hand: carriages were again dashing up the Newsky Prospect and the Great Morskaïa; and groups of pedestrians were again pacing leisurely the cleanly-swept trottoirs. On a fine March day, about four o'clock, a tall man in a long overcoat, a fur cap on his grey hairs, was seen walking down the Newsky Prospect. He did not look about him, and seemed buried in unpleasant thoughts. Suddenly a young man passing him in a droshky, called out loudly,—

"He! Feodor Vassilievitch! stay! So I've caught you at last!"

Tomiline—for it was he—turned round, and Volodia jumped out of the droshky, after having given the coachman twenty kopecks. This time he had no provincial look about him: he wore an overcoat of the newest cut, and a highly fashionable hat.

"Vladimir Alexandrovitch! what a chance! When did you come?"

"I came this morning by the express. You wrote

me word to come; so I am here. I have been twice to your hotel without finding you."

They walked on towards the Great Morskaïa.

"I don't think you came exclusively on my account, my dear fellow; you were delighted to see Petersburg again, after a whole year of country life, I dare say?"

Volodia blushed.

"No, no; if it had not been for you I should not have come. I have a great deal of business on my hands."

The young man was still in that stage of life in which people are fond of boasting of their occupations; moreover, he believed sincerely in the importance of his affairs.

"Well, what have you been told, Feodor Vassilievitch? Is there any hope?"

Tomiline had already spent a whole month in the capital, having had to despatch some very unpleasant business for the Zemstvo, which threatened to be of very long duration.

"Well, I think that the minister inclines to a more lenient view of your brother's affair. I know a certain Mr. Gostomiloff, who confided to me that all the papers concerning him had been returned to the minister, who wished to look them over again.

"God grant it. I am going to see the Count to-day."

"It struck me as very strange that this change

began when Boroffsky was transferred to the capital," Tomiline went on, after a short pause. "He is an important man now, yet his former relations to your brother——"

"Perhaps it is due to Elena Michaïlovna's influence; she is a clever and intelligent woman."

"What has Elena Michaïlovna to do with Boroffsky?" asked Tomiline, astonished.

"What! you don't know that she was married to him last autumn?"

Tomiline stopped short, looking aghast.

"What!" he cried; "did she really marry this old prattler?"

Tomiline hardly ever spoke slanderingly of any one; these words almost escaped him unawares, for he had always disliked the attorney-general, in whose voice he had long ago recognised a false ring.

"Elena Michaïlovna, indeed, this artistic, elegant woman," he murmured. Having always been a warm admirer of hers, and deeming her the personification of all womanly elegance, this unromantic marriage was simply a monstrous thing to him.

It was indeed strange; and there was a time when Elena herself would not have believed in the possibility of it. It had come on, unperceived, by slow degrees, as unlikely events mostly do. All of a sudden they had both come to the conclusion that it would be the very best thing for them, and they both confessed freely that it had been in their minds for

some time. Love was never mentioned between them; they were both much too clever for that. On the contrary, from the day on which Elena gave him the letter of Neradovitch, a sort of mutual loathing had taken possession of them; yet the remembrance of this crime formed an invisible link between them, which seemed to tighten and strengthen the longer the investigation lasted. Boroffsky went frequently to Petersburg; he never missed an opportunity of calling upon Elena, and every time their relations lost something of the indifference of former days. They were both conscious of some strange affinity between their characters. Though their path in life had been very different, yet it had had the same result: they felt very lonely; watched sharply over their own interests, and looked enviously upon everybody else.

After her separation from Dmitry, Elena had experienced a strong wish to indemnify herself for her lost happiness. Being unable to obtain the one prize so ardently coveted, she did as so many people do—she accepted that which was within her reach. But she soon discovered that in doing this she had not only lowered her standard, but herself too; and she wondered more than once how she could enjoy the world she now lived in. Swans, we are told, cannot live long in muddy water. This time, however, as in her early youth, ambition came to her rescue. If she could only find an object leading her on to honour and power she knew that she would be saved. But

a woman's ambition can only lead to something with the help of a man; she is too much of an inexperienced player to finish the game of her own accord. Boroffsky appeared to her in the light of a worthy partner. His whole personality, his cold perseverance, made success almost sure. Why need love unite them? On those heights where she wanted to walk icy winds were always blowing, and to climb them a steady foot and a clear brain were necessary. He, at least, would never curtail her liberty, would never spoil her enjoyment through a senseless jealousy. He would understand that their union could not be anything but an offensive alliance, and at an age when passion has ceased to play a prominent part, such marriages often turn out very happy.

Boroffsky thought just as she did. His hopeless love for Nadia had killed the possibility of his ever loving again. The thought of the young girl provoked the bitterest reproach in his heart, and filled it with such gloom and despair that the very source of a tenderer feeling was dried up within him; he felt perfectly hardened. The whole unbending power of his will and mind tended towards one aim, all the passions of his heart were concentrated on one point,—ambition,—never to swerve in their allegiance. His career had been swift and brilliant. The discovery of the Nihilists' den drew general notice upon him; but he knew very well that this did not suffice to

raise him to the heights of which he dreamed. He still belonged to the crowd of bureaucrats; and though he was among the most prosperous, yet he did not undervalue the difficulty of getting out of their ranks to reach fame. He had no real link with the higher spheres, yet he knew the full value of their support, and fancied that with Elena as his wife he might get within their enchanted circle. In the autumn he had been called to Petersburg on account of the present huge trial, and he had immediately resolved not to return any more to the provinces, but to take a decisive step and penetrate into the very centre itself, where there happened to be an opening just then.

But he found nowhere a willing ear, so he confided all his plans to Elena, and found her quite ready to help him. Thence the way to a tenderer confession was very easy, and he went over it with the quiet self-possession of a man who knows what he has to offer. He was readily accepted, and she consented to devote the two months of leave which he intended to take after their marriage to prepare his candidature. For this purpose they took a villa at Zarskoe Celo. When the news of their marriage spread, there was certainly no want of malignant observations; but Elena knew the Petersburg world too well to feel very alarmed about it. She was very independent, and meant to force people to forgive her for having married beneath her. Besides, Boroffsky's name was already well known in the society into which he

wished to penetrate; and two-thirds of the clever people of Petersburg decided that she had done very well. He, on his side, sacrificed all his radical ideas on the altar of the great world; but Elena did not feel particularly grateful for it. About the time when she had promised to become his wife the remembrance of Dmitry again stirred in her heart, and she wished to be able to wipe out her guilt towards him; so she asked Boroffsky to use his influence to have him recalled from his banishment. Female logic is indeed something incredible.

Boroffsky protested in a most scoffing manner, and gave her openly to understand in what light he viewed her unexpected demand; but Elena insisted so firmly upon it, and expressed her indifference as to the proposed marriage so resolutely, that he was obliged to give way. Besides, his nature was not cruel. The fate of his enemy was decided: he himself stood upon such heights that he could afford to be generous. On the very day of Boroffsky's nomination the minister took a sudden and lenient view of Dmitry's crime, and allowed him to return to the capital.

Tomiline and Volodia left the Newsky Prospect, and turned down the Great Morskaïa.

"So, so," said Tomiline, after a short silence, "Elena Michaïlovna might now—could now—do something for your poor cousin. Could you not talk to her about it?"

Tomiline was not aware of the breach between

Elena and the Koretzkys. Volodia bent his head without answering.

"When is the judgment to be pronounced?" he asked.

"They say the day after to-morrow! It is time, indeed; it has now lasted for a year and a half!"

"Yes; a year and a half! Awful!" cried Volodia piteously.

There was a slight ring of reproach in his voice, as if he felt ashamed of having been so much taken up with his own happiness while the poor girl suffered so dreadfully.

"They say that forty persons are to be condemned," continued Tomiline. "This big trial must of course be wound up with a splendid *finale*. Boroffsky wants to show how cleverly he has got all the threads of this great conspiracy into his hands."

Just at this moment, where the crowd was the densest, a victoria, drawn by bay horses, dashed past them. Volodia recognized the *général à la suite* who sat in it, but he gazed wonderingly at the young lady beside him, whose pretty face looked excessively bored.

"Who is that lady sitting beside Boris Sokolnitzky?" he asked.

'His wife. Don't you know? He was married to some very rich princess; I've forgotten her name."

It was Volodia's turn now to stare. Boris married,

indeed! His eyes beamed. He had always been a little jealous of Boris, had come to Petersburg with a certain heartache, and was now told that his rival was married! He tried to question Tomiline very closely, but the old man was unable to tell him anything.

"I shall try and see *her* to-day," thought Volodia, walking on at a rapid pace.

Tomiline left him at the corner of the Gorokhovaïa, having some business to transact at the Senate. The carriage with the bay horses had, in the meantime, stopped near the Isaak Cathedral. A tall gentleman, with a lady on his arm, was standing beside it, talking to the inmates. It was Boroffsky and Elena.

"Ah! Vladimir Alexandrovitch," exclaimed Boris, whose sharp eyes had recognised Volodia from afar off; "I am very, very glad to see you."

Volodia approached with a certain trepidation, but Elena held out her hand to him with a sweet smile; even Boroffsky's dry face had a pleasant expression. Some unaccountable change had taken place in their disposition.

"Allow me to introduce you to my wife," said the Count.

The young lady hardly moved her head as Volodia was introduced to her. Her pale and stony face was one of those which have, even in youth, a harsh and haughty expression, and from which

secret wickedness has banished all smiles. She was the sister of Anatole Bolkhowsky, and, like all the members of this family, she had a very high-bred air. In spite of her large dowry, she had reached her twenty-seventh year without finding a husband. This had exasperated her, and she treated all young men with great contempt. Her sister-in-law, the lovely Princess Lisa, would have been delighted to get rid of her, but had almost given up the hope in despair when Boris presented himself. Before taking this final step he had first made sure of being definitely rejected by Jenny. He knew that his future wife could not make him happy; but did he want this sort of happiness? He had been made a general, had twice refused the place of governor, which had been offered to him, and was now going to add the high connections and the large fortune of Miss Bolkhowsky to his own. What more could he want?

"Our marshal of noblesse," continued Boris, introducing Volodia. "How are you getting on at home?—no more riotings, I hope. How glad I am that you came. For some time, I trust. Young people must be gay. Entre nous, c'est une galère que ce métier-là."

"I regret very much that I shall never more be able to go to Nikolsky," Elena thought fit to say, as if excusing herself.

"Are you not coming next summer?" asked

Volodia, with a slight blush. "Your Nikolsky is so beautiful."

"Really, I don't know," answered Elena, laughing; "it does not depend upon me any longer."

"Who thinks of next summer now?" exclaimed Boris. "I do not even know what I am going to do to-night!"

"Come and dine with us," said Elena kindly. She wished very much to be on good terms with her cousin, though his young wife sometimes made her feel the weight of her own high-born dignity.

"I should have been delighted, but I dine at the club to-day; my wife is going to drop me there now. But she will avail herself of your invitation with the greatest pleasure."

"Boris, it is only four o'clock; you can't spend your whole afternoon at the club!" laughed Elena. "A nice statesman you are!"

"What shall I do, cousin? I enjoy my liberty as long as I can."

They all shook hands now, and two minutes later the bay horses galloped off towards the club entrance, while Volodia went on to the English quay, where the Count's house was situated. This time he rang the bell without any trepidation, and ordered the Swiss to announce him immediately.

The Count had not changed in the least: his grey eyes had their old fire, and his room had remained as unchanged as he himself. Even his tobacco

pipe was lying just on the same place where it lay the year before, when Volodia was received for the first time by him.

"I am glad to be able to give you some better news," said the old man, holding out his hand to him: "your brother has been recalled from his banishment."

Volodia thanked the old man warmly.

"No, no, I do not deserve your thanks; it has been done by the minister."

"Dmitry is coming here for the great trial," said Volodia sadly; "I fear he will again go on raving and complaining."

"I should do just the same; il a du sang dans les veines."

"But is nothing to be done, Count?"

The Count shook his head.

"For the present, no; but as soon as the judgment is pronounced, we might try. I do not despair."

"Then you think she may be acquitted!" cried Volodia, eagerly laying hold of the hope held out to him by the Count, and enlarging upon it; "but I can't understand why they do not call my brother and myself in as witnesses."

The Count shrugged his shoulders.

"They have their own logic in the chanceries. But tell me, have you only come on account of your brother?"

"I came expressly on his account; but then, I was also called hither by Tomiline."

"And you did not come for your own personal business?"

Volodia blushed furiously, and gazed shyly at the Count.

"I have not been here for a whole year; my duties as marshal——"

The old Count gazed at him with a gay smile.

"You need not speak so evasively; I know all."

A short silence ensued. An eager question trembled on Volodia's lips, but he did not dare to utter it.

"I advise you to call upon my niece to-morrow morning; she receives once a week, and you are also invited."

"You really think I can——"

The word "hope" was not pronounced, but Volodia's eyes spoke clearly enough.

"You'll see yourself," laughed the Count aloud. "How good youths are now-a-days: they come to us old men for advice."

A great change had indeed taken place in Elena's disposition, thanks to Count Sokolnitzky. When Jenny heard of Anna Grigorievna's death, she wrote a few lines to Volodia, to express all the sympathy she felt for his bereavement. But he only sent her a dry little note of thanks, for he still smarted under the impressions he had received at Petersburg, and

did not want to sadden her with his own grief. This coldness hurt Jenny, and wounded her to the quick, and she resolved to forget this capricious boy. At seventeen years of age, however, such a resolution is not carried out without heart-pangs, and her sweet face bore traces of her sufferings. Boris, who observed these tokens, resolved to avail himself of them.

Elena was also angry with Volodia, for she had been told of his meeting Jenny at her guardian's door. She wished her to marry Boris, above all, as it would strengthen her own position in society. Poor little Jenny had, therefore, to submit to the somewhat rough courting of her cousin, and could not even claim her guardian's help against his own son. The stubborn silence of Volodia, her rupture with the Koretzkys, left her without any support. This would have gone on for ever so long if a circumstance, very small in itself, had not opened her eyes.

On the 10th of May, her seventeenth birthday, her mother brought her a gift from Boris. It was a plain blue parasol, yet very expensive, the head of the cane being a costly cat's eye. She had happened to break the ivory cane of her parasol the day before, and Boris thought this gift would be acceptable. She refused to accept it.

"Mais vous êtes folle! c'est presque un oncle pour vous!" exclaimed Elena indignantly; and being

afraid of offending Boris, she hid the parasol in her own room without mentioning it to him.

The Ordinzoffs were spending the summer at Zarskoe, and here Jenny often assisted at her mother's small parties. She saw a great deal of Princess Lise Bolkhowsky, who seemed to have taken quite a fancy to the young girl. Elena received twice a week. Among her most frequent guests was Prince T——, with large, blazing eyes, and a strange mixture of shyness and ease, which became him very well. He fell over head and ears in love with Jenny, and came as often to Zarskoe as his services at the camp of Krasno Selo allowed it. Princess Lise became the warmest advocate of this courtship. She was fond of matchmaking in general, and wished especially this match to come off, as she hoped Boris would then marry the elderly sister of her own husband. As for Jenny, she flirted openly with the prince, hoping thus to get rid of Boris.

Once, when a larger party had assembled at Elena's house, Boris had wandered a little farther on in the park with Jenny. He had seemed much more indifferent of late, and the young girl had somewhat departed from her usual prudence. Suddenly a warm summer shower came down. There was no shelter near at hand, and Boris, taking hold of her arm, led her into a side avenue, assuring her it was the shortest way back to the house.

"Your parasol is very small," he said, smiling, then added, with a tender intonation: "Why do you never use the one I gave you, Jenny?"

"What!" she flashed out, "did mamma not tell you?" and she snatched her hand away from his arm.

"I asked your mother to give it to you, and I thought——" he said, somewhat uneasily.

"Don't you know that I can't accept any gift from you?" she cried hastily; "you, who are so clever, ought to understand this; or is it because you won't?"

They stopped, looking straight at each other. Boris looked rather sheepish, but he recovered himself quickly.

"You are quite wrong, cousin, to attach any importance whatever to such a trifle," he said, with studied gaiety; "it has none—at least, in my eyes. But now let us hurry home; it is beginning to pour, and we have lost our way."

They walked home in silence, and from that moment Boris resolved upon marrying the princess. The young girl breathed freely. But another struggle awaited her. Elena was silent about Boris, but she now began openly to advocate Prince T——. She wanted to see Jenny married before she entered upon her new life. To a woman of thirty years it is always trying to have a pretty girl of seventeen beside her. There were sharp encounters between them, because

Jenny turned a cold shoulder upon the prince as soon as she had got rid of Boris. The autumn came, and the young officer, not doubting his success for a moment, made his proposal. Jenny refused him flatly.

"You are mad!" cried Elena angrily. "Do you want to marry a royal prince, or are you still dreaming of that boy at Biälastolby? Well, I tell you that I shan't consent to this marriage until you are twenty-one years old."

After this Jenny applied to her guardian, and he came to her rescue without a moment's hesitation.

"Vous n'avez pas le droit de l'empêcher d'être heureuse," he said to her; "vous qui ne l'aimez pas."

Elena wanted to defend herself, but the Count showed such an unbending will that she feared lest this stupid romance of her step-daughter might lead to an open rupture with the Sokolnitzkys, which she dreaded above all. Besides, having settled her marriage with Boroffsky in her own mind, she wanted to avoid all that could excite them against her.

Jenny found a most unexpected ally in her future step-father.

"We had better be on good terms with her," he said to Elena. "Why should she not marry young Koretzky? He is a charming fellow, I tell you though a little silly."

Elena did not give way at once; but after two days' reflection, she came to the conclusion that Boroffsky was right, and that all would be better than a family strife. It is true, she hated the whole Koretzky family, but even this feeling had paled a little: her own marriage robbed her of the right to avenge herself.

Volodia was in the highest spirits when he left the Count's house. It seemed to him that he was ascending a mountain—the higher he came, the broader the view grew; he knew that he would not be able to reach the top without difficulty, but once there, no power on earth would be able to snatch his happiness from him.

When he alighted at Elena's house on the following morning, he had quite forgotten what had brought him to Petersburg—the sad fate of his relatives had faded away in the misty distance. On passing the huge building of the Crown prison, he was struck with the crowd which surrounded it.

"What's the matter?" he asked of the isvotshik; "do ask what they are doing here."

"They say that lots of Nihilists are going to be judged in there," he answered, pointing to the prison.

Volodia's heart sank within him.

"Poor Nadia! you are now standing before the tribunal!" he thought; and he pictured to himself what was going on behind the prison walls.

These gloomy thoughts, however, did not prevent him from pursuing his way; and when he rang the door-bell at Elena's house, all thoughts of Nadia had vanished from his heart. Elena was not at home, but when he reached his hotel, some hours later, he found an invitation from Boroffsky for the following Thursday on his table.

CHAPTER XVII.

ELENA'S house was all ablaze with light. She was sitting on a large sofa in a corner room, furnished *à la* Louis XVI. The straight-backed, white and golden armchairs, covered with crimson silk, looked stiff and cold, though they were scattered about the room in graceful disorder. The beautiful china on the tables, and the costly groups in the corners, did not rob it of that cold look which a room always wears before a large party assembles. Elena, in a white satin dress, with geraniums in her hair, had assumed that proud air under which a woman of the world tries to hide her shyness and trepidation. It was her first reception after her marriage, and she felt a slight doubt whether the party would prove a success or not.

It was ten o'clock. A few stray guests had made their appearance. Some bureaucrats, afraid of late hours, some mothers with ugly daughters, and some young men, looking shy and ill at ease, already filled the room. Elena was talking to a German minister, who sat staring at a lady opposite him, evidently

very much taken up with her dress, which did not look its best on the purple silk of the sofa. Boroffsky was standing in the doorway, talking to an old general, who seemed to suffer a great deal from gout. The dress coat and white necktie gave a stony look to Boroffsky's severe appearance. Was it his married happiness which had thus petrified him, or not? But the fact was that not even the most suspicious bureaucrat would have been able to discover a spark of radical enthusiasm about him. Jenny was nowhere to be seen. In spite of the warm, perfumed atmosphere, an icy solemnity was invading the room. The guests were slowly dropping in. Boris made his appearance with his wife, looking, as usual, excessively bored; then came a French vicomte, a great traveller and a stout friend of Russia. He had come to Petersburg on account of some mercantile business, and was writing for some great Parisian paper, under the name of Phedote. Elena was in a great flutter. The party did not seem as successful as she had expected, and she felt her heart sink within her. Boris, looking flushed and gay as ever, praised the new furniture of the house.

"Du style et du style bien soutenu," he said, letting his eyes roam over the room; then taking the arm of the German minister, he began examining some wonderfully gilded old Vienna china, praising it lavishly with the air of a connoisseur.

The French vicomte had sat down beside Countess

Sokolnitzky, who listened to his gay sayings with an apathetic look, as if hardly deeming it worth while to answer him.

"Do you know that I am very much taken with your caravansérail," he said. "Ce gastinoï dvor avec ses arcades toutes romaines puts one in mind of classic architecture."

"Do you really think so?" said the Countess, opening and shutting her fan.

"Yes, I think it very like the Coliseum; but the most wonderful thing of all is the chapel, where the tradespeople go to say their prayers before they impose upon their customers. What a great resemblance in this between the soft-hearted Slav and the pitiless Italian robber asking the Virgin to send him an English lady."

A faint smile appeared on the pouting lips of the young Countess.

"Is it not so?" said the Frenchman briskly, passing on to another subject, just as playful. He maintained that there was a sort of monumental beauty in Russian ladies, just as there was something feminine about the Russian architecture. Unconsciously he let out what had given rise to this idea, but it did not seem to please the young Countess, for she profited by a general move to get up and go away.

At this moment Jenny appeared, all radiant in her fresh young beauty. Her half-open, peach-coloured

dress suited her to perfection. Two tea-roses were fastened in her hair, gathered in a thick knot on her neck, and a diamond cross gleamed on the black velvet round her throat. With a quick movement of her eyes, she took in the whole room. How strange he is not here, she thought; then shaking hands with the young girls, she took them into the adjoining room, where the tea-table was set.

The rooms were, in the meantime, beginning to fill. Stout footmen with smiling faces were handing round the tea-trays, crowds of ladies in bright dresses were standing about, stopping the way, while the gentlemen, gathered in long rows before the windows, seemed to wonder why they had come. In Elena's morning-room, where, according to the latest fashion, the most wonderful variety of forms and colours reigned, people began to settle down to whist parties. Dulness seemed to pervade the whole room, except one corner, however,—the one in which the little Frenchman was sitting, with Boris and the German minister. He talked incessantly; not wishing, as he said, to lose one particle of his investigations concerning the high life of Petersburg, "cet écho affaibli des salons Parisians." Our old friend Peter Nicolaïevitch Koretzky had joined them, along with an old General Slavine, known for his sharp wit and his talent for caricatures.

"Eh bien, messieurs," began the little Frenchman. "You have another great political trial."

"Quelques sacripans qu'on a pincés," said Boris contemptuously, shrugging his shoulders.

The German minister stared silently at him.

"I beg your pardon," resumed the Vicomte; "there are forty of them, and among them the loveliest girl you ever saw, Mademoiselle Nadeshda Olsheffsky; un nom polonais, les juges en perdent la tête!"

Boroffsky, who was standing close to the group, could not repress a nervous twitching of his lips. Boris observed it.

"Que voulez-vous?" said General Slavine. "Une jolie femme, même sur le bane des accusés. She is indeed very lovely."

"I think you know her," said Boris, addressing Boroffsky. "Quant à moi, je n'ai pas peur d'avouer mes relations."

"Fancy, I once spent some days with her!" cried Peter Nicolaïevitch, aghast. "You can't imagine what a spirit of contradiction pervaded her whole being. It is really awful to think that one may meet such persons in the best society."

"Mais c'est très amusant, au contraire," retorted Boris. "It is a sort of masquerade."

However dreadful it was to Nicholas Ossipovitch to listen to these words, he yet remained as if rooted to the spot.

"Diable, c'est grave," said the Frenchman, turning on his heel. "Notre revolution n'a pris de telles proportions que parce qu'elle est féminine."

"S'il ne s'agissait que de femmes, nous en viendrions à bout," said the general, with a self-satisfied air.

"Avec des caricatures," whispered the German.

Slavine did not answer.

"Were you present at the trial?" asked Boris of Boroffsky.

"I was too busy for that," answered the latter, almost under his breath.

"You must keep a sharp look-out, or the judges might be too lenient to these wretches. Le contrôle avant tout."

"The justice court is independent!" retorted Boroffsky.

Boris smiled scornfully.

"Pretty independence! They say that one of them, a certain Neradovitch, has been reading lectures upon Socialism—a new sort of propaganda—at the cost of the Crown."

"We should never allow such things," said the Vicomte; "at least formerly, when we had a government; now, of course, when footmen sit in the ministry ——"

"Your Republic is a most splendid thing," laughed Boris. "France now-a-days, c'est de l'Offenbach avec une sauce au petrôle."

National vanity stirred all of a sudden in the Vicomte's heart. He might be a Bonapartist and hate the Republic, yet he could not allow Russians, "ces barbares du Nord," to laugh at France.

"Our country is great," he said loftily; "its government may be bad, yet we paid five milliards without difficulty."

The figure of the German seemed to expand, and he threw a glance of withering contempt on the Frenchman.

"It will be necessary to tighten the reins a little," said Peter Nicolaïevitch, in Russian.

"You must look out for able coachmen then," retorted the German, also in Russian; then getting up, he joined another group.

A small, select party had gathered round the Princess Zenaïde Stepanovna Starabielsky, known for her wit and sparkling conversation. They were also talking about the trial.

"I am not at all inclined to look so slightingly at these things as you do," she said to General Slavine, "c'est malheureusement très sérieux. The worst of all is, that you must feel pity for those poor deluded people."

"Students, perhaps, or reporters may do so."

"No; we ourselves. I assure you, when I hear people talk of this beautiful Miss Olsheffsky, who is behaving so modestly and sweetly, I ask myself whether she can be guilty or not. Is it not true?" she asked suddenly, addressing Boroffsky.

"I cannot judge of this," he answered, making a violent effort to master the emotion which the words of the Princess had provoked within him.

"No? Well, this girl interests me very much. I read all the details in the papers, and can't understand why they should condemn her. Count Sokolnitzky, who knows her very well, is of the same opinion. Il faut la recommander à la clémence; I ask this favour directly of you, Mr. Boroffsky."

He was unable to answer.

"How late you are, Count!" continued the Princess, addressing the old Count, who was advancing towards them.

"I was in the court of justice, because I wanted to hear the defence of that poor girl, Nadia Olsheffsky. All the spectators were deeply moved around me."

"You see," exclaimed the Princess eagerly, addressing Boroffsky, "I don't approve of this. Believe me, one ought to avoid the criminals being pitied by the judges."

Nicholas Ossipovitch was as pale as death.

"She will be set at liberty, I trust," said the Count.

"This business must be looked into," said the Princess; and turning her beautiful head towards the German minister, she began talking about the latest opera of Wagner. The conversation was brilliant and clever, the observations exchanged on art were elegant and delicate, yet Elena, who was sitting near the Princess, did not feel able to join in the general easy tone of their talk. The mention of Nadia's name had entirely robbed her of her presence of mind.

What! even in her own house, at her own party, this loathed name must needs pursue her, awakening the pity of her guests. She was so taken up with these thoughts that she only answered with a cold bow the devoted greetings of the Prince de la Torre di Falco, an Italian who had been a constant guest at her house in Nice. He had come to Petersburg to see her, he said, yet with the secret intention of looking about him for the opportunity of making a good match.

Volodia had entered the drawing-room about the same time. He had been to hear the defence of Nadia, and had barely had time to hurry home to dress for the party. No one knew him in the room, and when he bowed to his hostess, they all gazed at him in silent wonder; but no one was able to accuse him of provincial awkwardness, and even Elena was obliged to confess that he had changed a great deal since she saw him last: his soft, almost feminine features had become more manly, and a short black beard gave more vigour to his handsome face. He was presented to two or three ladies, but his eyes looked in vain for Jenny.

"The young people are in the adjoining room," said Elena, on perceiving his searching glance.

Volodia had been preparing himself for this meeting the whole day; but reality seldom answers our expectations. He had excited himself with fancying all they would have to say to each other, and now

they only shook hands, while uttering some broken, unconnected words. Jenny had been "out" since January, and young girls quickly learn to conquer their emotion; besides this, she was angry with him for coming so late—it was already eleven o'clock; but this she did not say. Volodia hated the whole society which surrounded her and made conversation impossible, for he felt intuitively that she was angry with him, and guessed that it was because he had come at so late an hour. Count Sokolnitzky came most unexpectedly to his rescue.

"I saw you in the court of justice an hour ago," he said, as he shook hands with him. "How dreadful it was to see your poor cousin there! her pale face will haunt me for a long time."

Jenny pricked up her ears.

"J'ai éprouvé une bien grande émotion," continued the Count, taking Volodia aside, "en voyant le visage pâle de cette pauvre Nadia; yes, a year in a fortress is no joke!"

Volodia's heart sank within him. An hour earlier he had sat at the judge's table—Boroffsky had procured him a ticket of admission—gazing at Nadia's wan face, while listening to the fiery speech of the lawyer. Now her face seemed to rise before him with a rigid expression, which looked like reproach, and he blushed at having come to this brilliant world full of his own sweet dreams of happiness.

"I wish you had been in the witness-box, I con-

fess," said the Count; "you might have saved your poor cousin."

"Neither I nor my brother were called in as witnesses."

"Yet Boroffsky led the trial, and he might have——"

It seemed at this moment as if Boroffsky had started out of the floor; wherever he stood, he was doomed to hear the same observations.

"Why didn't you call in the two brothers Koretzky as witnesses to speak in favour of poor Nadia?" asked the Count, turning towards him; "you who were so intimate in the family might have done it."

"You forget that this is no business of mine, Count."

This lie cost a superhuman effort to Nicholas Ossipovitch. He had given the strictest orders that the Koretzkys were not to be called in as witnesses.

The Count made a scornful gesture with his hand, and turned again towards Volodia.

"How is your poor brother? Will he come? But it is better, perhaps, if he does not come so long as nothing is decided."

"There you are mistaken, Count; my brother came yesterday, and was among the public."

Volodia's heart again smote him when he remembered how his brother had been standing amid the crowd of spectators, while he had been comfortably seated at the judge's table, thanks to that man who

had kept Nadia in prison for eighteen months, and at whose house he was now enjoying himself.

"Your brother was there! Poor Dmitry Alexandrovitch! how dreadful for him to hear all that!"

The Count pressed Volodia's hand. Boroffsky walked away, but the name of Dmitry, loudly pronounced by the Count, had struck Elena's ear; she turned pale and stopped short in her talk. She had done her utmost to obtain his pardon, and now that he had come, she trembled, for she knew he would call her to account for the wreck she had made of his life.

Jenny was also getting restless. The name of Nadia, pronounced by the Count, had stirred her slumbering love for her, and she wanted to know all the details of the trial. But Volodia did not return. It seemed to him as if he had no right to be happy now. He was standing in a corner of the room, listening silently and gloomily to the awful nonsense which the French vicomte was pouring into his listener's ears. Little by little he drew away from the group, and sauntered listlessly into the adjoining room. It was Elena's morning-room, dimly lit up by the bluish light of a hanging lamp; the whist players had already left the tables, and it was only occupied by two ladies, who did not observe the young man coming in. They were exchanging some observations far from flattering to their host.

"Don't you think the new possessor has stamped

his own *cachet* upon this house? Cela sent le parvenu."

"But she is an upstart herself, is she not? Why did she marry him, I wonder?"

"Why? But did you not observe the Italian, who looked exactly like a highwayman?"

"You seem to think that all is founded here on mutual concessions!" said the other.

"She was talked about at Nice before; do you remember?"

The ladies rose, their dresses trailing after them, and drew near the door. The rooms were beginning to look empty, and Volodia felt as if he should be glad to get away as quickly as possible. He had not found the impressions he had hoped for in this house, and after what he had just heard, it seemed even loathsome to him. He approached the door leading into the ante-room, but here he met Jenny, with the two girls to whom he had been introduced an hour ago.

"You are going," she said, stopping him; "do stay, I want so much to hear something about Nadia!"

They all turned back into the card-room, and sat down at one of the whist tables. The two girls took up the cards, and began twisting them in all sorts of fantastical forms. Most fortunately an elderly gentleman appeared, sat down near them, and began telling some stories, which sent them into fits of laughter.

"How is she, poor thing?" said Jenny, quickly availing herself of the solitude which was thus made to them; "how does she look?—old? thin?"

"She is as pale as wax; her eyes only are as beautiful as formerly."

"You don't know how much I pity her! I can hardly think of her."

"I was very much struck with the way in which she behaved: not one sharp word, no harshness in her tone. The others looked wicked, cruel, tried to be caustic, while she remained sweet and quiet. This is not only patience, it is heavenly peace within her heart. I felt how high she stands above us all."

Carried away by his admiration of Nadia, Volodia grew eloquent, and spoke in fiery words; perhaps the presence of the beloved girl added some warmth to his feelings. The two girls did not listen to their conversation, they only observed his beaming eyes, and glanced significantly at each other. A few moments later, however, they were fetched by their mother, and the lively old gentleman accompanied them to the ante-room.

"Well, do you know, Eugenia Alexandrovna, I do not pity her half so much as my brother; he spent the whole day in the court of justice, along with Tomiline. I saw how he longed to start forward and tell the whole truth, but it was impossible. It was torturing to witness—awful!"

Jenny listened silently, resting her arm on the

table, trying to hide her tears. Her own feelings told her what Dmitry must have suffered. Volodia had quite forgotten his present surroundings; laughter and talking were resounding in the adjoining room, but he only saw the court of justice before him, and the grief he felt for his brother prevented him from expressing the joy he experienced at seeing Jenny again after such a long separation.

"You are so young, so happy," he said, "it is difficult for you to imagine my brother's situation. To be quite near the girl you love, to hear false accusations brought against her, and not to have the chance of defending her,—this is worse than death! it is awful, indeed!"

He was silent. For a few moments they gazed at each other without speaking. Then, all of a sudden, the possibility of their being parted, too, before the decisive word had been spoken darted through his brain, and drove the vivid remembrance of his brother's sufferings from his mind.

They were squandering away the most precious moments of their existence. Who could tell, if he left the house to-night without speaking, if he would ever be able to find the same opportunity again? Strange to say, the same thoughts passed through her head! Their pity for another's grief had suddenly drawn them near to each other. Their present isolation among so many indifferent people put them in mind of that far-off time when they believed so blindly

in their future bliss and met so unrestrainedly in the garden of Nikolsky.

"Don't you think, Eugenia Alexandrovna," he began again, "that now we have one all-absorbing mutual interest, which no one else cares about here, we are again as closely united as we were in the country in former days?"

"Do you still think of Nikolsky?" she asked, with smiling eyes.

"I never forgot it for a moment during these long months, but I often thought you had forgotten it."

A bright smile lit up her sweet face; the selfishness of her young love made her forget all about Nadia.

"You now say exactly the same thing you said last year, when we met before my guardian's house."

"Yes; I doubted because I felt so guilty towards you, and to-night, when I saw you, I fancied you were——"

"And now," she interrupted him, "do you still fancy I am angry?"

The flash of joy which suddenly lit up Volodia's face was a sufficient answer.

The two young people had not observed that Count Sokolnitzky had entered the room.

"Oh, so you are hiding here!" they suddenly heard him say, in his kind old voice; "vous n'êtes pas brouillés, à ce que je vois."

Volodia started up. He would fain have put the

decisive question to Jenny's guardian, but he felt too shy. The old man, however, did not wait for him to speak; he gave them his consent of his own accord, evidently delighted to get rid of the responsibility which weighed upon him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HALF AN HOUR after the last carriage had driven away from Boroffsky's house, Volodia also left it, and walked off towards the Liteinaïa with quick and joyous steps. The night was warm and starry. The sea wind blew softly over his face, while the almost transparent mist of the spring night spread slowly over the sleeping town. The young man's brain was in that whirl of bliss which wants to communicate its overwhelming riches to the outer world. A drunken passer-by almost knocked him off his feet, but even for him Volodia had only a kind word, and drawing a ten-ruble note out of his pocket, he pressed it into his hand. At the very corner of the Liteinaïa he heard, all of a sudden, the well-known voice of Dmitry, who had been walking up and down the Sergievskaïa with Tomiline. Volodia did not tell him that he had been at Boroffsky's party, but the white necktie, which looked out under the collar of his coat, betrayed him.

"So late!" said Dmitry, in a reproachful tone; "you have been to that woman's, I know!"

Volodia felt ashamed of his own radiant joy.

"I was going home on foot," he answered, as if excusing himself. "What news? is all finished?"

"She was condemned to be sent to Siberia," said Dmitry, almost inaudibly. "They call this favour? Well, we shall see. I'll call upon this woman to-morrow; she may be able to do something through her husband!"

He stopped suddenly, as if unwilling to say all his thoughts.

"Let us go on," he said; "words are of no use."

They walked silently towards the Hôtel Demuth, where the two brothers occupied two rooms. Though Tomiline lived in the Little Morskaïa, he remained with them, in spite of the advanced hour of the night.

"You are not going to bed, I suppose?" said Volodia, throwing himself into an armchair, while Dmitry began pacing the room restlessly. "Let us have some tea."

He rang the bell and ordered tea.

"You'll stay with us now," said Tomiline, giving a cigar to Volodia and lighting one himself. "I am afraid for your brother; his nature is strong, to be sure, but there are emotions that kill."

Dmitry was not listening to them; from time to time he drew near the table to swallow some tea.

"Tell me all from the beginning," said Volodia to Tomiline. "I only went to the sitting to hear the defence of Nadia, you know, while you spent the whole day there."

Tomiline told him all in broken, disconnected words; he found it very difficult to relate his impressions in an orderly way.

"How is it that she could not prove her innocence?" cried Volodia; "she ought to have protested loudly. The judges would have felt that she spoke the truth."

"Her answers were so vastly different from those of the others. I am sure they admired her quietness."

"And yet they condemned her, you see."

"The dead letter of the law condemned her, alas! Yet the judges and the attorney-general know her innocence; it is easy to see that they condemned her unwillingly. For the moment nothing else could be done; the proofs were overwhelming, and Neradovitch maintained his accusation of her with the greatest obstinacy."

"He, at least, is condemned to the galleys!" exclaimed the young man joyously.

"Yes, for twelve years. Nadia's sister and her husband, too. This is enough, I think; no one expected such a sentence. The horrid little Jew, Goldstein, awoke no pity whatever; every one felt instinctively that if he was set free he would murder every one he possibly could. He almost confessed as much. But, to do him justice, he did not parade himself off as the others did. Neradovitch, when he was allowed to speak, tried to dazzle them all with his

eloquence, while Goldstein, who was sitting beside him, glanced scornfully at him, and refused to avail himself of this favour. 'I have nothing to say,' he said curtly; 'I do not acknowledge your right to judge me, therefore I won't waste one word upon this question.' He was likewise condemned to twelve years' imprisonment."

"Did Neradovitch speak well?" asked Volodia, experiencing a sort of faint echo of his former reverence for him.

"Many high-flown phrases, of course; but then, you know, all this is so old, and has been said so often. I almost fancy he felt this himself; for he spoke without conviction, and the public looked quite disappointed. An old grey-haired man, with bright, clever eyes, who sat next to me, whispered in my ear, 'Do you call this talent or power? Can he draw youth on with such hollow phrases?' To speak the truth, the women alone were pitied, especially Nadia; she behaved in such a dignified way, and showed no fear. Toumanoff was quite broken down, his voice trembled. Others, a boy of eighteen years, above all, wanted to make a row; one of them was led away."

"And what about Brushkoff?"

"Brushkoff was in a vein of good luck, being condemned only to a year of prison; perhaps, because he had done nothing but joke during the whole trial, laughing at himself and at the others."

"Did not one of them say a word in defence of

Nadia? Brushkoff, for instance, knew very well that she had dropped them all long ago. Did their consciences not torment them?"

"Their consciences had nothing to do with the whole business; they were simply avenging themselves upon her."

"Awful! awful!" exclaimed Volodia involuntarily, and shaking himself, as if to get rid of his sad impressions.

"But the worst of all is, that your brother and I would have been able to set at nought all the evidence against her, and prove her perfect innocence, and we were obliged to be silent! What man must he be who, knowing this, resolved to exclude us from the trial?"

These last words struck Dmitry's ears.

"And this same man had me banished from Petersburg to prevent my watching his proceedings! If he had had me punished for the deadly offence I was guilty of towards him, I should have deemed it perfectly natural, but thus to persecute a helpless girl!"

He raised both hands to his head.

"I am going mad, I fear," he said, "and I want all my strength, for I alone can do something for her. If my head gives way, all is lost for ever."

His bloodshot eyes were dull and motionless.

"My thoughts are dreadful, and my temples are throbbing."

The hand which he had put on the table to steady

himself now began to shake, and he sank down into an armchair, in a state of half-unconsciousness.

"You want quiet, above all," said Tomiline; "this is the third sleepless night which you have passed since you left Biälastolby."

Dmitry waved his hand.

"Do you think I should be able to sleep now?"

His eyes suddenly fell upon his brother's white necktie, as he had done in the street when they met.

"Volodia," he cried, in a contemptuous tone, "are you not ashamed of yourself to go to that man's house? You must have found it very nice, indeed, not to leave it till two o'clock in the morning."

"I have not yet been able to tell you that I was betrothed to-night," said Volodia hesitatingly.

"Indeed," exclaimed Dmitry, and his voice changed and grew soft. "She is not guilty, poor thing; she is a sweet girl. And why should you suffer because my life is wrecked? No, I congratulate you. Forgive me."

The brothers kissed. Yet, though there was no tinge of reproach in Dmitry's eye, Volodia felt ashamed of his own exuberant happiness, as if he had no right to it.

The pale morning light was already creeping through the half-closed curtains when the brothers parted with Tomiline. The physical exhaustion which always makes itself felt towards dawn at last conquered Dmitry's excitement. He lay down on the

couch, and a heavy, dreamless slumber carried him far away from his heart-breaking grief, robbing him of the sense of suffering, at least for a few short hours. When he again opened his eyes, it took possession of him once more, more implacable and overwhelming than ever before.

CHAPTER XIX.

ON the following Wednesday afternoon, six days after her party, Elena had her usual reception, between four and six o'clock. She received in her small morning room, where the many-coloured low chairs seemed to invite the guests to settle down to a comfortable chat. Her visitors consisted chiefly of men. A great change had taken place in Elena's conversation and bearing since she left Nikolsky. She was no longer that cold and severe woman who, in spite of her youth, had so well known, during her husband's life, how to keep all men aloof. The reports that were circulating about her and the gay tone she had adopted had caused many even of her nearest friends to withdraw from her society. Her marriage had not changed anything in this. To-day she was reclining on a low couch covered with dark satin, which blended favourably with the light tints of her grey dress, trimmed with lace and ribbons. The tips of her small feet, shod in bronze leather slippers and embroidered silk stockings, peeped out under the skirt of her dress. Wicked

tongues pretended that she made herself younger than she was. She had, in fact, just reached her thirtieth year. A small tea-table of costly lemon tree, with a tea-service of vieux saxe, was placed before her. She had been filling one of the cups with fragrant tea, and poured some drops of very thick cream into it, handing it to a young general, with whom all ladies of thirty were in love. As a proof of his gratitude, he talked the most awful nonsense imaginable to them. On her other side sat the curled and perfumed Italian Prince Torre di Falco, his legs crossed in the fashion of the last century. A third guest, a young Russian diplomatist, was sitting on a low straw chair, looking somewhat shy. They were all smoking. Elena allowed this, and herself excelled in the art of drawing the perfumed vapour out of her papyrus. The conversation was in French, though the Italian Prince spoke it very badly.

"Z'est uno homo d'oune grerande capacita politique," he said, meaning Nicholas Ossipovitch.

The general, with an imperceptible smile, added to the panegyric of Boroffsky in such a way that it was impossible to know whether he was laughing at him or not. Then he hurried on to another topic, and began to enlarge upon the bliss of married life.

"L'amour est aveugle," he said; "quel dommage que la jalousie ne soit pas myope. In Italy, Prince, you never care for such things, in spite of your

southern temperament. That's quite right, il ne faut pas faire un drame de ce qui est un vaudeville."

The Italian assured him that "oune coup de couteau" was the very best way of settling these family dissensions.

"No; we have forgotten how our forefathers, who were so much cleverer than we are, did these things," retorted the general, "alors il y avait de l'amour dans le scandale, maintenant il y a du scandale sans l'amour."

Boris now made his appearance. He greeted every one gaily, praised the weather, and then whispered to Elena,—

"May I congratulate you?"

She shook her head. Jenny's engagement had not yet been made public, but Boris wanted to say this to prove his perfect indifference to the projected marriage.

"How is the Countess?" asked the general, laughing.

"Pretty well, thank you;" and his face took the comical, anxious expression with which he always answered any inquiry after his wife. His comrades, knowing this, never missed an opportunity of asking after her.

The conversation was very dull; the general tried to be witty, but did not succeed. The sharp eyes of Boris were riveted on him and on Elena. He had

observed that she treated the Italian coldly, and that he, on his side, though he tried to assume a victorious air, looked rather sheepish. Boris mentioned the marriage of Russian girls with foreigners, and praised them as mostly happy. The Italian said a man ought never to marry before his fortieth year, and Elena glanced contemptuously at him.

A footman appeared at the door, and advanced noiselessly on the soft carpet. He brought a card on a silver tray.

"What foreign ways!" exclaimed Boris. "Forgive my curiosity, dear cousin."

He took up the card, and read, "Dmitry Alexandrovitch Koretzky."

"Are you really going to receive him?"

"Yes," answered Elena, looking away.

This was what Boris wanted. He began twirling his moustache, and glancing at her with the greatest sympathy. The scene will be rather curious, he thought.

As soon as Dmitry entered, the general and the diplomatist rose. The first pressed Elena's hand and hurried away, trying not to look at Dmitry, as if washing his hands of Elena's receiving such unknown guests. The Italian remained, because he had no reason for going away, and, moreover, had no tact. Boris also stopped, to enjoy the scene which he expected. But he was mistaken; there was no scene at all.

Elena shook hands with Dmitry, and asked him if he had been long in Petersburg. Dmitry gave her his hand without pressing hers, saying that he had already spent a week in the capital. A short silence ensued; Boris broke it by uttering a few words without any particular sense, for which, however, they all felt grateful, as it afforded them time to settle down in the usual forms of life. Elena and Dmitry, seeing that they were expected to talk rationally, submitted like people of the great world, as they were.

"They say you have a beautiful place between Salerno and Paestum," said Boris, addressing the Prince. "When we were in Italy we wanted very much to go there, but we were told that it would not be safe on account of the robbers.

"Z'est oune caloumnie," said the Prince. "I have no robbers on my estate; they are much farther off. But you are very wrong to call them robbers: they are very honest people, only dissatisfied with the present order of things."

The Prince was an adherent of the Bourbons, and thought that he fulfilled a debt of gratitude by protecting the robbers. The greater part of his revenue consisted in the tribute which they paid him for his hospitality. He grew suddenly perfectly loathsome to Elena. She compared him involuntarily with Dmitry, whom she had loved so ardently and purely, and a sickly longing to be once more alone with him, in order to justify herself, overcame her.

Boris, feeling tired of bantering the Prince, rose with a cunning smile, and shook hands with Elena. The Italian followed his example with an offended air.

Elena's heart throbbed most fearfully. She felt herself very guilty before Dmitry, and feared that he knew her crime; yet she conquered her emotion and said quietly,—

"We did not part in a very friendly way, Dmitry Alexandrovitch, but we have known each other so long that I dare say you have forgotten these small misunderstandings."

"The past has long ceased to exist for me, Elena Michaïlovna."

They were at cross purposes. She wanted him to forget their last quarrel for the sake of that past which had ceased to exist for him.

"The more easily you will forgive me," she answered, playing with the rings on her fingers, "if the cause of these misunderstandings has ceased to exist. We are now almost related to each other. I confess that I was wrong to refuse your brother the first time. I was unjust to him. Now I know him better. He is charming, clever, and independent."

"I also rejoice at my brother's happiness."

"Yet you have been here a whole week and never visited me!"

"Excuse me, Elena Michaïlovna; what I have to say to you is very grave, and I confess I have been

putting it off from day to day. But I did not come to talk of my brother's happiness."

"I see that you can't forgive me, after all," said Elena, looking down. "I did not know you were as vindictive as that. I was ready to hold out my hand to you as of old."

And she raised her eyes to his, to try and discover the reason of his anger.

"No, no! you are perfectly wrong; I don't think of our past now; but I can't forget you are the wife of the man who—— Well, you know yourself what part your husband played in this trial."

Elena breathed freely. She almost rejoiced in his hatred of her husband. Who knew whether his first love to her was entirely dead? He seemed to blame her second marriage. Yet she thought it her duty to defend Nicholas Ossipovitch.

"You seem to forget that it is my husband alone to whom you are indebted for being disgraced no longer."

"What! do you mean to say that it was he who allowed me to return to Petersburg?"

"Yes; but it was done because I asked him to do it."

"I thank you for it. Thus I was enabled to be present at the lawsuit—to see *her* once more."

His tone was one of the bitterest irony. A footman now appeared in the doorway, carrying a lamp with a very broad shade. A soft, mystical light

pervaded the room, making it look almost dark. The rays of the setting sun, peering through dark clouds, still shed their light on the town. The footman carefully let down the heavy silk curtains, in order to exclude the remaining daylight from the cosy room. Elena got up and moved onwards. She seemed to think that in changing her place she would be able to shake off the alarm which Dmitry's words had provoked within her. Dmitry also rose.

"I do not receive any one," she said to the footman as he left the room.

"Not even Vladimir Alexandrovitch?" he asked, turning back.

"Yes, of course. Is Eugenia Alexandrovna at home?"

"No; she has gone out for a walk with her governess."

The footman stopped near the door, as if awaiting another order; but not receiving any, decided at last upon leaving the room.

"You see," said Elena, returning to her old place, "your brother is quite one of the family; he spends all his time here. I have got quite accustomed to him of late. Why should you, whom I've known since my childhood, be a stranger to me? No! I can't believe it. Even you ought to think this impossible."

"I don't consider you a stranger, Elena Michail-

ovna," he said, with a certain softness in his tone, "and I am going to prove it, for I have come here to you with a request which you alone can fulfil."

"No," she interrupted him, "I don't want to hear your request; we'll talk of that later. I shan't let you off so quickly. You must tell me all that has passed during this year and a half in which we did not meet." Here she saw how his face twitched. "Well, I confess it will be rather hard upon you; still, it will be easier to tell it to one who will listen with interest, and whom you yourself admit to be no stranger. Sit down here." She pointed to the place near her on the couch. "Tell me all about your poor mother. I loved and revered her so much."

Dmitry sat down.

"Don't ask me for any details. I can't bear it as yet."

She did not insist, but talked to him so sweetly and tenderly that he began almost unconsciously to talk of his life. He felt almost grateful to her for her sympathy. Why should he answer with coldness when she was so kind? The success of his mission depended upon her alone. She could save Nadia. When he had resolved to address himself to her, he had counted a great deal upon her old love for him, though he did not like to confess this even to himself.

"How much you must have suffered during this time!" she exclaimed, after listening to him, and her

whole being seemed transfigured with sympathy. She held out her small, soft hand, and this time he pressed it as of old.

"I have not been much happier, Dmitry, believe me. My whole life is nothing but a ruin."

"You were—married."

She sighed deeply. She felt a certain distrust in his tone, and to disperse this she began to defend herself, challenging him with having offended her, and growing so eloquent that a whole hour slipped away without his observing it. Dmitry felt himself drifting farther and farther away from the object of his visit, but he felt powerless against her, and almost wished to convince himself that he had been wrong when accusing her of Boroffsky's crime, while she tried to discover from his answers whether he knew the part she had played in the drama of poor Nadia's life.

"It has not been the life I once dreamt of, Dmitry," she said, almost in tears. "It was once in your power to give another direction to it, but the past never returns. I myself am not what I was before; I must try and forget. But it is not my fault if I am only surrounded by such stupid people as you saw here just now."

She experienced a faint hope that his former love for her would revive, and perhaps take the place of his love for that bride who was now lost to him for ever. Her own love was so pure and so exalted

that she fancied it could save her from herself. But he awakened her out of these self-delusions.

"I know that you are very good-natured, Elena," he said. "You won't allow this awful injustice to take place. You alone can redeem this—well, this crime of your husband."

"I do not understand."

"You have a great influence over Nicholas Ossipovitch. He is almost almighty in the ministry. Ask him, beseech him, to obtain Nadia's pardon."

Elena's face suddenly changed. The soft, tender expression vanished from her eyes; her lips grew dry and rigid.

"You think this depends upon me and my husband? You overrate his influence."

"Nonsense, Elena, nonsense! I know that the Emperor alone can pardon Nadia, but I know that your husband has a great influence in the ministry; and so —— But why do I say all this to you? You know it yourself. Only try, and you will succeed. You interceded for me once."

"Oh! that was quite another matter. You had been unjustly accused, been banished without reason."

"And was Nadia guilty? You know better than I do ——"

"I don't know anything," she interrupted him, and her face took a stony expression. "I did not follow the examination, and I knew her too slightly in the country to form an opinion of her."

She got up and approached her escritoire. Dmitry felt as if a wall had suddenly risen between them.

"How can you say so?" he exclaimed.

"Yes; I don't see why I should mix in this affair. I confess that I was very much shocked to see you did not take any steps for a year and a half."

Dmitry started up as if he had been stung.

"I did not do anything, you say! I spent several months here, tormenting and beseeching the ministers; for this I was banished, according to the orders of your husband. I then wrote to all my acquaintances; not only I, but my brother and Tomiline did. Your uncle, Count Sokolnitzky, interceded for her. All our efforts were vain; your husband had gained everybody. Knowing her innocence, he not only accused her, he did all he could to get her condemned. And you think you have the right to accuse me of indifference!"

Elena's lips trembled, her hand clutched the writing-table against which she leant. Her eyes were dry and staring.

"Why don't you address yourself once more to my uncle?"

"I went to him, and he promised to help me. But you know very well that it is my last resource, while Nicholas Ossipovitch has but to say one word to clear up the whole business."

Elena did not answer. He drew near to her, forgetting all in his excitement.

"What did you say just now about your sympathy?" he cried, in a high pitched-voice. Don't you know that I love no one on earth but Nadia? Why do you persecute her? what did she do to you?"

"What!" she repeated, almost mechanically; "is it not her fault that my whole life was wrecked? And you think I shall intercede for *your* bride!"

She stopped suddenly on hearing a slight cough behind her. She turned round, and saw—Nicholas Ossipovitch.

CHAPTER XX.

NICHOLAS OSSIPOVITCH had just returned from a very important committee sitting. The sharp, decisive measures which he had taken were condemned by many people, yet all admired his talent and energy. He was evidently rising in the world. But this did not seem to make him feel glad; at least, when he returned about six o'clock from the sitting, he looked wan and gloomy. For the last few days he had been silent, and had even avoided the society of his wife. The Swiss told him that her excellency had a visitor—a Mr. Koretzky; not the one who came every day, but an older one; and that he had been there for more than an hour. Boroffsky started slightly, but composing himself, he went upstairs with his firm, even step, without taking off his uniform, adorned with the St. Anna Order.

On seeing him, Elena and Dmitry both felt somewhat embarrassed. Elena wondered how long he had been there, and Dmitry remembered that he was in the house of a man whom he had offended in a most deadly way, and of whom he was nevertheless going

to ask a favour. A flush of shame mounted to his brow. Boroffsky remained a few moments motionless, enjoying their confusion. A hardly perceptible smile played round his pale thin lips. He felt perfectly sure of himself, knew that the prerogative which belongs to coolness of mind was his.

"I am very glad to find you here, Mr. Koretzky," he said, in a constrained voice, without moving; "I have some very good news to communicate to you. *Your bride*"—he laid a particular stress on these words —"is going to be set at liberty very soon, I think."

Having delivered this speech, very slowly and measuredly, he fixed his eyes searchingly on Dmitry and his wife's face. Did he read there the different feelings which his words provoked? In his eyes gleamed a spark of triumph and self-satisfaction, and his heart beat with a wild gladness, for he had guessed that wrath and anger would fill his wife's bosom at this news.

In the first rush of overwhelming joy Dmitry made a movement as if to throw himself forward to seize his enemy's hand and thank him, but the cold and scoffing look of Boroffsky's eyes held him back.

"I am very grateful to you," he said; "the more so as I am sure that I owe this favour to you."

How cold and soulless did these words sound compared to the waves of maddening joy which swept over Dmitry's heart.

"The lawsuit proved that Miss Olsheffsky had only

been guilty of youthful imprudence ; we can't punish her for that."

"It is rather late for you to come to this conviction," was the rejoinder which trembled on the tip of Dmitry's tongue, but he kept these imprudent words to himself, and only said,—

"I am nevertheless grateful to you."

But Boroffsky continued, without heeding him,—

"The Senate had already proposed to change the banishment into some more lenient punishment; this afforded me the opportunity of pleading for her entire liberty."

Elena remembered of a sudden that she also ought to show some sympathy.

"I am very glad for Dmitry Alexandrovitch, and rejoice especially at *your* having been able to obtain this mercy."

She spoke with a studied sweetness, yet neither Dmitry nor her husband were taken in by her tone; indignation and confusion were visible on her pale face and trembling lips.

Dmitry felt as if he could not stay a moment longer in Boroffsky's house. The constraint which pervaded the very air they breathed, all the unspoken feelings which hovered around them, made him feel faint and sick. He knew instinctively that as soon as he had shut the door an explanation must take place between Elena and her husband. He understood that the sudden change in the latter's feelings

towards Nadia was not the result of his love for her; it was rooted in circumstances nearer to his home and honour.

"Da svidania," said Elena, as Dmitry took leave of her.

Nicholas Ossipovitch bowed without speaking. But Dmitry had hardly closed the door before Volodia's gay young voice was heard on the stairs. On seeing his brother, he hurried up to him.

"How glad I am to see you! So you have made your peace with Elena Michaïlovna, I hope."

Dmitry did not answer, but told him of Nadia's being set at liberty. Volodia was almost beside himself with joy, for now there were no longer any dark spots in his radiant life.

"How delighted I am!" he cried. "Well, you see that Elena Michaïlovna is a good woman, after all. I was unjust to her."

Dmitry did not think it necessary to rob Volodia of this delusion. Jenny appeared at the opening side door of the lower floor, looking very lovely in her plush walking-dress, which she had not yet taken off. She showed Dmitry the gift of her betrothed—a golden serpent, with two rubies instead of eyes—clasped round her slender wrist.

"Our wedding is to take place on the 30th of April," she said; "after which we leave at once for the country. It is time for Volodia to take up his work again," she added, with a touch of importance. "To-

morrow our betrothal will be made public at our party. You will come, of course?" she inquired, thinking that Dmitry must have made his peace with her step-mother as he had spent more than an hour with her.

"I do not even think of it, Eugenia Alexandrovna," he said.

She looked at him in silent wonder, then she joined Volodia in his wild exclamations of delight at Nadia's deliverance.

"Why are we standing here on the stairs?" she asked suddenly. "Come into my room; it will be delightful."

But Dmitry refused; and Jenny, taking Volodia's arm, skipped gaily upstairs.

"Do you know, we had better not go to mamma just now," she said; "let us sit down in the saloon till dinner-time."

In the meantime an explanation of a rather unpleasant nature was taking place in Elena's morning room.

"Why did you arrange this comedy?" she asked sharply, as soon as the door closed upon Dmitry.

"You are mistaken; there was no comedy at all."

A mocking smile played round Boroffsky's lips.

"You once interceded for Dmitry Alexandrovitch; I completed your good work. The liberty you wanted for the bridegroom is granted to the bride; and I think I deserve your gratitude."

"I wonder what changed your feelings so entirely and so suddenly," answered Elena, with blazing eyes; "you were not always convinced of this girl's innocence, were you?"

Boroffsky stared hard at her; then going up to the door, he shut it.

"Excuse me," he said, "our conversation threatens to become somewhat lengthy, and I cannot endure this false light. A strange taste of yours to have candle-light in the daytime."

The adjoining room was still quite clear, though twilight was descending over the town from the darkening sky.

Nicholas Ossipovitch crossed his arms and looked intently at his wife, but this time without any scorn; nothing but a harsh implacability was visible in his eyes.

"It pleases you to accuse me of being inconsequent in my views and actions," he said; "if you wish, I'll explain this inconsequence to you. I think that Nadia Olsheffsky has suffered enough for having had the misfortune to meet us on her path of life; however much we had to avenge on her, that vengeance is satisfied now."

In the even tone of his voice a trembling note was audible.

"I did not choose to give the public the right to accuse the court of justice of injustice. I had quite enough of the opinions I heard on Thursday night.

You observed the impression this unfortunate business created here, did you not?"

"What do I care for the opinion of ladies who forget on the following day what they said the evening before?" answered Elena, with a withering scorn. "It seems strange to me to hear that you care for town gossip, or do you fancy that your new position necessitates a tender conscience?"

These last words almost drove Boroffsky wild, for there was a grain of truth in them, of which Elena had no idea herself. The further Boroffsky advanced on the road to honour and fortune, the fainter grew the remembrance of his love to Nadia, and the necessity of avenging himself upon her had almost entirely faded from his thoughts. An unconquerable ambition made him lend a willing ear to the voice of justice.

"You are wrong to fancy I did this out of pure personal motives," he said; "I thought of you, too. The return of Mr. Koretzky might have been a source of trouble to you. I knew beforehand that he would try and see you, and beseech you to save his bride. Now his wish is accomplished, so I suppose he won't trouble you any more."

The look which accompanied these words told her more than the words themselves did.

Elena was silent for a few moments, then she gave a short, dry laugh, and said, "Vous me feriez presque croire que vous devenez jaloux."

Boroffsky shrugged his shoulders.

"Though I have a right to be jealous, I remember our agreement; but even while remembering it, I do not forget that my wife must be above suspicion: and that is why I do not choose Mr. Koretzky to visit at our house. You wished so ardently for his return that I suppose my fears not to be quite unfounded; besides, his wife claims his presence now."

Boroffsky stopped. Elena glanced at him, but she looked as quickly away, for she saw a threatening expression in his eyes.

"I receive whomever I like, and whenever I please," she answered, making a faint attempt at asserting her independence.

"I take the liberty of observing that your position and mine—for whatever you do we are closely united—require a great deal of prudence. You married me because you believed in my future. You will easily understand that a lady standing in such near relations to those who govern the empire cannot behave like a heedless school-girl. If you should ever forget this, I shall take care to put you in mind of it—in your own interest."

"What do you mean?" asked Elena, sinking down in a chair, a hot flush of shame spreading over her face.

"I mean that you ought to forget that episode of your life which took place at Nice eighteen months ago. It may have been very well in the gay surround-

ings of a Southern town, but it does not suit our severe forms of social life. You chose the part of a political lady; you must now adhere to it."

"You forget yourself!" cried Elena, in a white heat of indignation.

"And now I have some news for you," continued Boroffsky, without paying the slightest attention to her words; "your friend, Prince, if I am not mistaken, Torre di Falco, is about to make a most advantageous marriage—he is going to marry the daughter of one of our railway princes. You don't know his name? Those people don't belong to our society."

"J'ai toujours pensé que c'était un aventurier," said Elena, trying to show her indifference.

"I do not wish you to receive him too often. If you have a bad opinion of him, so much the better, it will be so much the easier for you to comply with my wishes."

Elena gazed at him in silent wonder.

"I want you to be more exclusive in the choice of your friends, and to be more prudent in general. How could you, for instance, give the order not to admit any one as long as Mr. Koretzky was with you? This is incomprehensible to me."

"You questioned the servants, it seems."

"I hope never more to be obliged to have recourse to that measure," answered Nicholas Ossipovitch, sitting down in an armchair with all the quiet dignity of the master of the house; "you, who are a

clever woman, will understand that this explanation ought to be our first and our last."

"You seem unable to get rid of the tone of an attorney-general even in my drawing-room," said Elena, rising.

"My words are sufficiently clear, I trust."

"Well, and if I do not care to listen to them?"

"Not care?"

Boroffsky got up and turned slowly towards her.

"I do not advise you to try. I am not a jealous husband, certainly, Elena Michaïlovna, but I won't allow you to play with my name or with my dignity. My position you cannot spoil; it is made. Wickedness and insinuations cannot undermine it; still I do not choose such insinuations to be made. This I tell you, once for all. If you do not comply with my wishes, and do not choose your acquaintances according to my wishes, I part with you. An open, entire rupture is better than a false peace. The scandal of such a rupture will fall upon you. You would lose more than I. How many friends would remain to you, were I to give you up to the slanderous tongues of your world, I wonder? You boasted of your position before me, treated me like an upstart; and now I tell you, your position would crumble down like dust in your hands were I to wish it."

Saying this Boroffsky left the room without taking his eyes off her. For the first time in her life Elena

felt checkmated. A powerful will had broken her resistance and left her helpless in his hands. A deep hatred of her husband filled her heart, and she upbraided herself most violently for this thoughtless marriage, while a despairing sense of shame bowed her head down into the dust.

CHAPTER XXI.

COUNT SOKOLNITZKY finished the work begun by Boroffsky. As soon as he heard that the petition for grace had been despatched by the ministry, he addressed himself to the highest person in the realm, to whose generous heart no one ever turned in vain.

"Nous approchons de Pâques, Madame," he said among other things; "il ne s'agit pas de pardonner à un coupable, mais de sauver un innocent."

These words were listened to with the greatest attention. All the details of Nadia's life awakened the warmest sympathy within the Empress's breast, the more so as the Princess Starabielka had already mentioned her sufferings to her. The strictest orders were given to hurry on her release as much as possible, and she was set free much more quickly than Dmitry had dared to hope. She took some lodgings near the Tauride garden, and here the two lovers met, after a year and a half of separation.

When Dmitry held her again in his arms he forgot all the anguish of those dreadful months. He covered her pale face with burning kisses, looked long and

lovingly into her dimmed eyes, and thought her more beautiful, dearer, and lovelier than she had been in those far-off days when she confessed her love to him. But Nadia was not able to give herself entirely up to the joy of this meeting. She had told the truth when she had written to him, that it is impossible fully to enjoy life again after having been in prison. These eighteen months lay like a heavy shadow on her; and even when she was folded in her lover's embrace, this cold shadow hovered over her like a huge night-bird fluttering its wings and threatening her with some unknown danger. Dmitry did his best to quiet her and breathe true, full joy into her weary heart. He never mentioned the past; but Nadia would not even hear of their wedding. She fancied she had lost the right to be his wife, that she would spoil his life—bring sadness and darkness into it.

"I am no longer of this world," she said. "I have been pardoned, that's true, but then, I was condemned, and you will never be able to show yourself anywhere with me."

Dmitry refused to listen to this, of course. He did not care for the world's opinion; if he was to be shut out of it, so much the better. He was ready to bury himself in some wilderness with her, far from all those who might want to look down upon her. And Nadia complied with his wishes. The marriage was to take place as quickly and quietly

as possible, and they were to start immediately for some secluded spot in the mountains of Tyrol or Switzerland. Fresh air was what she wanted above all, and the mountains tempted her especially on account of their being so different from her prison walls.

Jenny and Volodia called upon Nadia on the following day. They asked her to be present at their marriage, but she felt it would be impossible.

"One can't step directly from the prisoner's cell into the great world," she answered, smiling.

An abyss was lying between her and the world, and Dmitry, though he did not like to confess it, was also conscious of it. The glare of the great world would dazzle her, he knew, just as the broad daylight blinds those who come out of a dark room. Volodia had to submit, however unwillingly, to these arrangements. The day so impatiently expected, the 30th of April, came at last. Though town begins to thin about the end of April, yet they had to send many invitations, for it is a known thing that people delight in being asked to a wedding.

Jenny, who had been made a maid of honour a few weeks before, felt radiantly happy. She was neither shy nor frightened, but gazed as trustingly and lovingly at Volodia as she had done from the first days of her betrothal.

"C'est une noce sans mère, mais aussi sans larmes," observed Princess Starabielka.

There are few weddings of which this can be said—that they are without tears.

Count Sokolnitzky gave her away. Old Peter Nicholaïevitch Koretzky was in the highest of spirits. After the ceremony, he whispered into Volodia's ear,—"How lucky that your brother had the tact not to come with his Nihilist bride!"

Volodia flushed scarlet and looked angrily at his uncle.

"Not a word against Nadia," he said; "neither Jenny nor I will allow it."

The old man turned a deaf ear upon him, but from that moment he felt an involuntary respect towards his nephew.

Tomiline, who had also been among the guests, described all the dresses to Nadia on the following day, dwelling especially on the bride's loveliness.

"How sweet she looked in her white satin dress, all covered with lace! She seemed wrapt in a cloud, and her eyes burned like two bits of charcoal in her rosy face. When they drove off to the station in the afternoon, they were literally covered with flowers. Elena Michaïlovna looked very beautiful too, but she was as white and cold as marble. I looked intently at her; there was not a muscle of her face that trembled, nor a fold of her dress that moved; she seemed to belong to the crowd of indifferent spectators."

Nadia listened to the garrulous old man's praises with a sympathising smile. But Dmitry thought in-

voluntarily that his brother's fate in life was strangely different from his.

A week later, another marriage took place, in quite another way. Nadia and Dmitry were married after vespers in the Pantaleïmon Church. It was almost empty. The setting sun threw its slanting rays through the windows, struggling victoriously with the dim light of the church candelabra. The cracked voice of the old priest and the singing of the choir resounded strangely under the vaulted roof of the empty church. No one was present but Tomiline, a professor, an old university friend of Dmitry's, five or six of his former colleagues, and a very old relation of his mother, the widow of a General Poshekontzeff. Dmitry wondered a great deal at the old lady's coming to the wedding, but she was so good-natured that it was impossible not to invite her, and she enjoyed vastly the rare opportunity of putting on a heavy dark-coloured silk dress and adorning her head with a cluster of grapes.

It was strange, indeed,—and Tomiline and the Count felt it,—that Dmitry and Nadia should stand thus quite alone on such a day as this, accompanied only by chance acquaintances and unknown relatives. But the two young people never gave a thought to this. They concentrated all the strength of their mind on one single feeling of deep gratitude towards God for having granted them this happiness at last.

On the following day they went abroad.

CHAPTER XXII.

ON the large stone terrace of the Hotel Schröder, at Heidelberg, a young lady, dressed in an excessively elegant morning dress, was reclining on an easy couch. On her fair, slightly dishevelled hair a small lace cap was fastened, a plaid was wrapt round her feet, and a black lace mantle was thrown carelessly over her left shoulder.

A few steps led down from the terrace to the garden. It was midday, but the September sun was not very hot, its rays, sometimes veiled by passing clouds, sometimes shining down from the transparent blue of the sky, threw a sharp light on the foliage, already tinged with the bright colours of autumn. The varying light at one time overflooded the mountain tops opposite the terrace, bathing their dense oak woods in warm tints, at another disappeared behind the clouds, steeping them in dark brown shadows. Thus the waves of the sea break against the sloping shores, covering them now with a dazzling white foam, now with dry, colourless sand.

The young lady was lying motionless on her couch,

her long eyelashes drooping over her weary eyes, an expression of exhaustion visible on her face; in spite of this, it breathed a full and perfect peace, such as is only enjoyed by those who have ceased to expect or to fear anything in life. A German doctor, one of the most famous in the country, a professor and a Geheime Rath, had just left her, and was now talking to her husband in the adjoining room.

"Beruhigen Sie sich doch, Herr von Koretzky," said the doctor, "there is not the slightest cause for uneasiness; nothing but a little weariness, very frequent with nervous young ladies."

"My wife was never nervous," answered Dmitry.

"Ach, das können Sie nicht wissen," answered the professor, somewhat impatiently. "We scientific men do not understand nerves as you do. I find in your wife, so to say, an echo—einen Wiederhall—of former sufferings."

Saying this, he gazed scrutinizingly at Dmitry, and proposed to give Nadia some drops, and to try beside that "vollständige Gemüsthsruhe und frische Luft. Then he pocketed his golden fee and left the hotel. On the stairs he passed a very handsome man, with an excessively pretty lady on his arm, followed by a dozen trunks and *nécessaires de voyage*. The gentleman was dressed in an English travelling suit and a soft felt hat. His companion had a short, dark-green dress on, adorned with very fantastic buttons. A very small coquettish hat was poised on

her thick, curly hair. The young man inquired of the Swiss if Mr. and Madame Koretzky lived in this hotel. He talked in that soft and hesitating way Russians use when they have never been abroad before. The Swiss answered, saying that "die Frau. Baronin ist eben auf der Terrasse, der Herr Graf möge nur eintreten." The young people laughed, and hurried on through the gallery leading to the terrace. Dmitry and Nadia recognised them before they reached the door. "Jenny! Volodia!" they cried, rushing into each other's arms.

At first their excitement was so great that they did not understand one another; but little by little their agitation subsided, and to a mere looker-on, it would have seemed as if they were all enjoying perfect health and happiness. As for Jenny and Volodia, it was impossible to doubt it, even at the first look—their sun-burned faces beamed with mirth. Volodia had got a manlier air and a more elegant figure, and Jenny was just as supple as of old; in the freshness of her face, the softness of her features, and the slenderness of her figure, there was still something childlike. Yet she did her best to show her dignity as a married lady, and in her eyes sometimes flashed a conscious spark that had nothing of the child.

Dmitry and Nadia, however, did not show the same outward signs of health. He had shaved off his beard, and this gave an older look to his face; besides, grey hairs were beginning to appear on his temples.

Her eyes had recovered their old brightness, and the same look of unfathomableness, coming from the depth of her soul, lit up their radiant orbs. But her face and small hands were transparent, and the pink flush which played on her cheeks in moments of excitement could not entirely hide their paleness. Her beauty was more exquisite than ever, and her pure features seemed still more refined, as if the loving hand of some great sculptor had completed their delicate outline.

"Will you come into your room and change your dress?" said Dmitry, after he had been told that his brother had come over for the whole day, and had taken three rooms on the first floor.

"No, no; we have only come over from Frankfurt, just to see you, and are not at all dusty."

Volodia then began to tell how they had spent the summer, what innovations they had introduced at Biälastolby, and how perfectly everything worked.

"Bad crops, I tell you, are not to be met with anywhere. We have now begun to sow the spring corn. But Jenny and I won't hear of going to live at Nikolsky. Jenny thinks que c'est trop grand pour des jeunes mariés."

"When Volodia is appointed marshal of noblesse for the province, then we'll go and live there—not before."

Dmitry felt hurt at the words, without knowing why.

"Please, Mitia, order luncheon for us here on the terrace; the air is so lovely."

It was quickly served, and was composed of three German dishes with French names. In spite of their excellent appetite, Volodia and Jenny never ceased talking: the former talked chiefly of farming and politics, the latter, though she listened to her husband with the rapt attention of a young and devoted wife, found means to tell Nadia of her own elegant dresses, and of the improvements she was going to introduce at Biälastolby. She had already succeeded in buying whole heaps of old silver, rare carved furniture, and Frankenthaler china.

"Uncle Peter has got the Alexander Nevsky," said Volodia, among other things; "it was his greatest wish, so now I fancy he will want to rest; and I, you know," he added hesitatingly, "I was made a 'Kammerjunker'* on the 30th of August, quite unexpectedly."

"Then you will have to appear at court, I suppose?" said Dmitry.

"We don't think of it just now. We are going to Paris to-morrow; from thence to Italy, where we shall stay till about the end of February; and early spring will see us back at Biälastolby. Do you know," said Volodia, "that Boris Sokolnitzky has at last consented to go to Dnieprovsky as governor. I met him at Zarskoe, at Princess Bolkhowsky's,

* A gentleman of the bed-chamber.

where I dined with Jenny. He said to me, 'My dear fellow, I am going back to the province, to take root in the soil once more, but this time in a different way.' He is very ridiculous—Boris—but such a good-natured fellow."

Volodia was fond of praising his new friends. Dmitry and Nadia looked at each other and smiled.

"I hope the Countess won't feel too dull in the country, or she might start at once for Petersburg. She will get la nostalgie de la Néva, and Dnieprovsky is said to be a sort of hell."

This and many things besides did Volodia say, deeming all very important; but to Dmitry it seemed as vain and futile as the echo of some long-forgotten past. When he heard all the travelling plans of Volodia and Jenny, always on the look-out for new impressions, he wondered how happy people could rush about in this way. His eyes sought those of Nadia, and they both thought that happiness only consists in the vicinity of the one being we love, and that they would never dream of running after it on high-roads.

"You can't imagine how changed my mother-in-law is," exclaimed Volodia, without heeding the signs Jenny was making to him. "She leads a very retired life at Peterhof, and does not even receive the pious people, to whom she is so devoted. She never misses evening prayers! What a change! Oh, oh! As for his excellency, I don't think he is as pious as

she is; but then, he is too much occupied to mind his wife's doings. He will soon be appointed minister. Here in Russia we are never secure against such surprises."

Jenny threw a vexed look at her husband, but Dmitry had not heard the last words. He was pondering over the question what might have produced this revolution in Elena's mind, and whether she had at last hit upon the true path in life, after having sought it so long and vainly.

Coffee was served. Volodia crossed his legs and lit a cigarette.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you something very interesting. Guess whom I met at Frankfurt yesterday. Neradovitch himself!"

Nadia turned ghastly pale.

"Neradovitch! I fancied him in Siberia!" said Dmitry.

"No, he is not there; he succeeded in escaping on the way thither. He had hardly recovered his liberty before he came upon a monk who was collecting money for a church——"

"How do you know all this?"

"He told me so himself. Wait a little; let me tell it in the right order; it is quite a story. He approached the monk very civilly, and walked a little way with him. But as soon as they reached a sheltered place, he threatened the holy father with a cudgel, requiring him to surrender all the books and papers

he had about him. After that he continued his way, knocking at all good people's doors for the benefit of God's churches. Thus he reached Moscow. Here he lived for a whole month in the house of a widow, who worshipped the holy man. But he suffered agonies of fear and dread. 'Every time I met a policeman,' he told me, 'I felt my hair turning grey.' He resolved at last to go abroad, and to take leave of his widow. This he did, travelling by Smolensk and Warsaw."

"With the monk's passport?"

"Oh, no; he would have been too closely watched abroad. He paid fifty rubles to a Jew, who took him over the frontier in a telega, in which he had smuggled some ready-made dresses into Russia the day before. His money did not take him any farther than to Frankfurt. There he lives. How, do you think? By selling papers in the streets; Jenny and I met him thus."

"Yes," said Dmitry pensively, "sometimes a chip is carried on for several versts by a gust of wind, but then it drops down and rots where it lies in the grass."

"What do you think of this? That disgusting man asked Volodia for money as soon as he recognised us, in order to get to Paris, where he hoped to earn his living by giving lessons!"

"Did you give him any, Volodia?"

"I provided him with twenty marks. They won't

last long. I asked him why he did not rather go to Geneva, the real rallying place of his party. 'No,' he said; 'thank you very much; I've had enough of these people.' Only fancy, Neradovitch turning steady! In the evening we met him again; he was coming out of a beer-cellar, perfectly drunk!"

With these words Volodia got up and stretched himself lazily, as people do sometimes after a copious luncheon.

"Shall we take a walk through this picturesque country?" he asked of Dmitry. "I dare say the ladies will be delighted to be left alone for some time."

Dmitry seized his hat and cane, and they walked out on the road leading up to the castle. For some time they were rather silent, only exchanging a few stray remarks.

"How grey he has got!" thought Volodia, looking at his brother. They were walking up the steep mountain path. Though Dmitry's gait was still brisk and elastic, he had lost the impetuosity of early youth. At every turn of the sloping hill the view changed, sinking deeper and deeper down in the valley. The roofs of the houses grew nearer and nearer, shutting out the view of the river. High above them rose the red towers of the Evangelical Church and of the Jesuits' dome, the houses themselves seeming to melt into one many-coloured mass, around which the tops of the trees stood out like green

spots. Another turn upwards and the grey streak of the river, like a torn ribbon, began to appear.

The brothers passed in through the large gateway of the exterior castle wall. Volodia breathed fully and deeply the clear autumnal air.

"It is lovely here, indeed!" he said, with that wondering, almost timid glance with which travellers generally take in a quite unexpected, beautiful view; "only tell me how long you intend to stay here. This is not exactly a place in which to spend winter."

These words suddenly loosened Dmitry's tongue, though he did not answer his brother's words directly.

"Volodia," he asked, in his turn, "did you not observe something very peculiar in Nadia's aspect? Be quite open with me."

"Peculiar? No. I only think she is a hundred times lovelier than she was. It is true, she is a little pale."

"I am very anxious about her, Volodia."

And his voice trembled and his eyes sought those of his brother beseechingly. Volodia saw that his brother wanted to have a serious talk with him, so turning away from the castle, he directed his steps to that part of the park where the rock projects the most steeply over the valley.

"We spent the summer in the Austrian mountains," began Dmitry, "at a lovely little place on the borders of the Traun lake, where tourists never stop,

and where you need not fear to be molested by our dear countrymen."

Volodia gazed at his brother, wondering why he was afraid of meeting his countrymen. Dmitry understood his dumb question.

"I wanted to help Nadia to forget the past," he said; "she must begin life anew. I hoped to see her rally in that mountain nest, in the midst of those grand surroundings. We made the acquaintance of two families, whom we got to like very much. They took quite a fancy to Nadia, and never put a question to her."

"Well, but that was delightful, was it not?" said Volodia, observing that Dmitry stopped; "alone with your wife in a lovely country, surrounded by good friends, what more could you wish for?"

"I wanted nothing else; I was as happy as a child during those two months."

Volodia glanced at his grey hairs and looked away with a sigh.

"But now I am most anxious about her. The mountain air did nothing for her. She is drooping like a flower gathered in the garden. The slightest reference to the past moves her in a most extraordinary way. You saw how pale she turned when you mentioned Neradovitch, did you not?"

"Forgive me; it was very heedless of me."

"Well, we came here to consult a very celebrated doctor. He said that she wanted nothing but air

and quiet to get quite strong again ; but they always say the same thing when they don't understand the case ; and I feel very, very uneasy."

"Why don't you come with us to Italy?" asked Volodia, after a short silence ; "those perfectly new impressions might perhaps erase the old ones in Nadia's heart. You must, of course, avoid large places like Rome and Florence."

"We have thought of it," answered Dmitry quietly.

They were now standing on the top of the rock. The whole valley lay stretched out at their feet; towards the west it expanded and broadened, losing itself in the misty distance, where the pale line of the Palatine Mountains bordered the horizon with a hardly perceptible white streak. The Neckar wound itself onwards, as if playing with its silvery scales, on which transient, golden sparks danced in the bright sunshine, while farther off, in the very depths of the landscape, a milky white vapour hovered over the broad expanse of the Rhine. A transparent light haze filled the valley, slowly rising towards the pale blue sky, on which white clouds were lazily sailing onwards. The buzz of the town resounded beneath them like the splashing of far-off waves, indistinct and whispering voices blending with loud and discordant ones.

The brothers sat down on the bench facing the town.

"Well," began Volodia, "what are your plans for the future? When do you intend to return to Russia?"

"I have never given a thought to that," answered Dmitry unwillingly.

"No; but you can't go on living in this desultory way, without any occupation; it is very unlike you."

"I have the right to be lazy, if it suits me. Give me a little breathing time, please, for Nadia's sake."

"Yet this is not the life she dreamt of, nor did you. Full, perfect life is only possible at home; activity ——"

Dmitry's heart again sank within him, as it had done during luncheon. It seemed so strange to hear Volodia praising an active life to him. These words hit the only sore place in Dmitry's heart, and such places are always to be found, even with very happy people.

"Enough!" he cried suddenly. "Society has not yet got a place for my wife to live in, and I only live for her, so ——"

"There you are wrong, I assure you. In Petersburg, perhaps, I don't know; but with us in the country ——"

"Let us drop this subject," said Dmitry, placing his hand on his brother's shoulder. "If you have enjoyed the view sufficiently, we might have a look at the castle and then return home. It will soon be dinner time."

The brothers spent two whole hours wandering about on the heights, and Volodia gave vent freely to his admiration of the surpassing loveliness of the landscape, but the conversation about their future plans was not renewed any more between them.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHEN Nadia found herself alone with Jenny, she took her down into the garden and settled her in the vine-covered arbour. Volodia was right, they wanted to be alone, to chat about the many important and mysterious subjects which men are unable to understand and appreciate. Very young married ladies, however much they love their husbands, always harbour some little corners of their hearts into which the husband is not allowed to peep, and which must, therefore, be disclosed to some female friend. Nadia passed her arm round Jenny's waist, put her head upon her shoulder, and kissed her underneath her ear.

"Well, Jenny, are you quite, quite happy?"

A smile of wondering condescension sparkled for a moment in Jenny's eyes, as if such a question was perfectly ridiculous, no bliss being as great as hers.

"I have no leisure to reflect on such questions," she answered proudly. "We have only been abroad for one week, and have already enjoyed the Swiss Saxony, seen four museums, and purchased lots of things! We are rushing about the whole day."

And Jenny told her how they never found time for anything, and how pleased she was to show all these interesting things to Volodia, who had never yet been abroad.

"Yes; but the summer in Biälastolby was not so," said Nadia. "There were no museums nor curiosities."

"Well, then we had a great deal to do. When Volodia went to town on business, I had lots of things to arrange in the house. I was delighted to see how much he enjoyed his grave occupations. I even tried to help him. We studied books on rural subjects; it interested me immensely. And then we had our furniture re-covered. We sent to Moscow for the *cretonne*, and had all the rooms on the first floor tapestried with it.

On hearing all these details from Jenny, Nadia found that her honeymoon must have been rather troublesome, and she almost regretted the transformation her dear old home had undergone.

"All that must have been very charming and gay," she said, raising her head from Jenny's shoulder, "but I think a little more quiet would have been nicer."

"Well, darling, do not be angry with me, but I ancy you are living a little too quietly for a young married couple. You look sad, as if you had no faith in the future; while I trust blindly to it."

A shadow crossed Nadia's face. She laid her head

again on Jenny's shoulder, and whispered in her ear, "I don't know how long this happiness will last Jenny, dear. I sometimes fancy I am going to die soon ——"

"What?" screamed Jenny, aghast.

"I am very sorry for Dmitry, for I know that if I die he will never be able to enjoy life again."

"What do you feel?" asked Jenny, trembling with fear.

"Nothing particular. Only a great weariness, a sort of exhaustion stealing over me, while a great peace and quiet fill my heart. I seem to be slipping downwards."

Nadia suddenly shut her eyes, as if the feeling again overcame her.

"Last summer, when I was in the mountains with Dmitry, I sometimes lost my breath, and my heart ceased to beat, only to begin to throb and flutter again in a dreadful way."

"What did the doctor say?"

"Nothing, I fancy. I only observed his grave and anxious face when he examined my heart and lungs. He was here just now, before you came."

There was a short silence.

"I have not yet told you my whole budget of news," Nadia continued, with a faint blush; and she whispered into Jenny's ear that great and solemn mystery which filled her whole being with fear, expectation, and an unutterable joy.

"Indeed! and when did you know?" asked Jenny kissing her.

"The doctor told me just now. I hoped so, but did not dare to believe it. Dmitry does not know as yet. I'll tell him to-morrow. Well, and you, Jenny?" she asked, changing her tone.

Jenny blushed and shook her head with a sigh.

"Nothing yet? Well, you have not been married so long."

"How can you say that you don't believe in the future, dearest?" said Jenny, with a little tinge of envy at Nadia. "I don't understand you."

"Alas! Jenny darling," said Nadia, stroking her hand, "I sometimes feel so frightened, as if this great hope was never to be fulfilled, as if I should not be able to give him a son." Nadia never doubted that she was going to have a son. "Who knows how it will end? I feel such a responsibility!"

"Why give way to such sad thoughts?" interrupted Jenny, wanting to comfort her. "You are worrying yourself in vain."

"Well, even supposing that I am not going to die, how shall I educate a son? Since I was told this, I want, oh! so very much, to live. All my peace of mind has disappeared. I want to enjoy him, to educate him; and a secret voice tells me it won't be."

She burst into tears. Jenny kissed and caressed her, telling her it was a sin to talk in this way, that she would get many children, and live to educate

them all. Nadia began to feel comforted, and both sisters agreed that their lives were as clear and bright as this sunny day.

"Nadia! how is this? Still in the garden?" cried Dmitry, as he returned from his walk with Volodia. "Nothing on but your thin dress! It is almost five o'clock! Have you forgotten what the doctor said?"

They returned to the house, where dinner was awaiting them.

"Do you know what we settled during our walk, Nadia?" said Dmitry. "We are going to Italy for the winter, all of us; so nothing now remains but to choose the place where to go to."

"How delightful!" exclaimed Nadia, while an enraptured smile lit up her face. Her conversation with Jenny had done her good, and a youthful, healthy flush burned on her cheeks. Dmitry observed this, and smiled gaily.

"Have you been very gay together?" he asked.

"Oh, yes! I am delighted to think that we are going to spend the winter together in Italy."

They began to search all possible corners of Italy to find a proper place to winter in. Dmitry protested loudly against Rome and Florence, as being unhealthy. Sorrento and Sicily were too hot and too far off. Volodia wanted to be in a place whence he could rush off to Rome at a moment's notice. Jenny proposed Cannes, as being very elegant and

yet not so noisy as Nice; but Dmitry settled at last upon San-Remo, where life is quiet, the climate lovely, and from which it is easy to get both to Genoa and to Nice. Volodia and Jenny did not say whether this choice suited them or not.

They left for Paris on the following day.

When Nadia, blushing and with radiant eyes, told her secret to her husband, it seemed to her as if joy was not the predominant feeling which she read in his eyes—a nameless anguish was visible in them, that same anguish which Jenny had done her best to quench within her the day before. Nadia, who now felt much more trust in the future, set about comforting him.

"Do you know, Dmitry, what occurred to me just now? We have been enjoying such true and real happiness for months, why should it not last for some time longer? I don't know what you think, but I want no other joy in life."

"Nadia, Nadia! why do you talk thus? how should I want anything else, now especially, as I know——"

Nadia interrupted him, slightly shaking her head.

"No, Dmitry; the life which suffices to my happiness cannot be sufficient to you. You cannot go on living for your family, even if you have children. Do not interrupt me," she went on, as she observed a protesting movement of his hand; "I know what I say. You gave up all your occupations for my

sake. Though you never said so to me, I know that you fancy I won't return to Russia again. You avoided all our acquaintances last summer. Yet you cannot be perfectly happy without occupation."

"Do you think I am longing for Biälastolby?"

"No, not exactly. Do you remember telling me, when I made your acquaintance, that you intended to work, and not only in the superficial way in which most people work? You thought work a duty. That was one of the reasons why I began to love you. Well, all this you gave up for me."

Dmitry had never confessed these regrets to himself, yet they were there in the depths of his heart; for he had always feared that she would fancy him dissatisfied with his lot in life. And now she herself mentioned these misgivings.

"You want me to deceive myself once more as to the importance of my work!"

"No!" she cried gaily; "deceit is not necessary; only go on with your modest work on your own estate. Look at your brother—he is marshal and farmer at the same time."

Dmitry smiled.

"Yes; Volodia takes life and its duties easily: he goes to town for the sittings, signs some papers, reads books about agriculture, and tries to apply them to his ancestral soil. But if you look closer into his business, it is nothing but tinsel and self-delusion."

"You are wrong to speak thus, Dmitry," said

Nadia, frightened at the despairing words of her husband; even she had no idea of the depth of his wounds. "Where others do not succeed we ought to try and do better, but not deny the worth of the whole thing. You are a Russian, remember; to despair is sin and pusillanimity."

"Pusillanimity!" cried Dmitry, with a frown. "Did I not accept all sorts of work, on my estate, in my own house, in public and administrative service; and what was the result of it? My uncle discarded me after six years of drudgery, the peasants set fire to my barns, and killed my mother! The Zemstvo made a search in my house, because I unmasked a rogue, and government kept my innocent bride in prison for eighteen months! No, I have paid my tribute to my native country; I have done with it!"

He began pacing the room in great agitation. Nadia found no words to answer him.

"And lastly, what is the result of this much-praised activity?" he cried, stopping before her. "The repair of rotten bridges, the erection of schools, in which children are taught Heaven knows what, while they would be a hundred times happier in God's free air!"

"No, Dmitry," cried Nadia, "that is not so, and you know it very well. You said just now that you had paid your tribute to your native country. It is not true. No one is ever able to do so.

As long as only one poor wretch exists whom we could help, but refuse to do so, we have not paid our tribute either to God or to mankind. If it were not so, life would be too easy for us rich people—to leave all work behind and go and live abroad. And as you left Russia on my account, then know that I have learnt long ago to forgive."

A burning wish to convince her husband and see him turn back to life's real duties beamed in Nadia's eyes; she longed to see him rise once more to that lofty height which he had occupied formerly, that her love for him might always blend with her adoration of something higher and nobler.

"Can you really forgive, Nadia?" he said wonderingly. "Well, I can't."

"Listen to me, Dmitry; sit down here and let me tell you all."

He sat down on a low chair near her and leant his elbows on the couch on which she was reclining.

"You spoke just now somewhat contemptuously of Volodia, but I am obliged to tell you that he is more useful than you are. He fulfils all the duties allotted to him in a simple, straightforward manner, because he is honourable and active. That is better than your proud disdain, I think."

"Nadia, what do you want of me?"

"This. We shall spend the winter in Italy, and in spring will return to Russia; and you must promise to be the same as I knew you at the beginning of

our acquaintance. I shall help you, and you will see how easily we shall work together."

She gave him a bright smile. He bent his head in silence. Suddenly a doubt crossed their minds whether this future, of which they disposed so freely, belonged indeed to them, and a nameless dread crept over them, that same dread which an experienced sailor feels when he discovers the first tokens of an approaching tempest in the dark-blue tropical sky.

"Oh! Nadia, Nadia!" exclaimed Dmitry, "why are we losing these precious moments on such dry, indifferent subjects? We are happy here, are we not? Can't it be the same to us, whether we are at home or not?"

She knew what he meant, and a deep pity for him invaded her soul. If she had felt quite sure that he could live the life for which she wanted to educate him worthily and well without her, she would perhaps not have felt so sorry to pass away, but submitted humbly to her fate. But now she trembled for him.

"Dmitry," she whispered, bending down to him and throwing both her arms around his neck, "do you know, I sometimes think we are not going to be together long. Do not cry, dearest."

He covered his face with his hands with a gesture of violent despair.

"It is only an idea of mine, dearest," she said;

"still I think we ought to be prepared, and I know that you have thought so yourself, sometimes."

He got up and turned away to wipe his eyes.

"No, no, I don't say this because I feel unwell; on the contrary, I am much better and stronger to-day. I should like to walk up to the castle. The news the doctor gave me was a wonderful medicine; it did me a world of good. Come, let us start at once."

She put on her hat, took up her sunshade, and, leaning on his arm, walked on to the boulevard, from which the way branched off to the castle. The large avenue of palm-leaved plane trees was empty. The peaceful little town was slumbering in the quiet midday.

"Dmitry, dear," she said, looking straight into his eyes, "I wish so very much to be as closely united to you in thought and feeling as I was in Biälastolby. I have so much more to get over than you have, and yet, you see, I have conquered all my resentment, and can think calmly of the past. In prison I learnt that no misfortune on earth ought to make us hate life or men. You have just been telling me that you are perfectly happy, and yet you harbour wrath and anger in your heart."

"You are a saint, Nadia; but I can't forgive, especially when you talk of our parting, as you did just now."

"The future is not in our hands, Dmitry. I only

mentioned this because I think we ought to make peace with everybody before we die. Where is your strength if you lose courage as soon as life does not smile on you? Remember, I only talk of this because I feel so particularly well to-day. Tell me, how will you be able to educate your children if you have no faith and no love for your country and your country-people? And yet you will have to educate them."

Dmitry looked into her eyes, and it seemed to him as if she had that strong faith in the future which he lacked. He felt ashamed, and resolved to try and erase the feeling which his words had provoked within her.

"You are right, Nadia; I know it. I confess freely that I have often felt unhappy because I am so useless. We shall return to Biälastolby next summer and take up all our old pursuits. So that is settled."

She answered him gaily, and did her best to dispel his fears.

"Are you not afraid of getting too tired?" he asked her, as they began the ascent.

"No; there are so many benches here, I can easily rest, and this delightful air will give me strength."

She felt so light-hearted now that the last trace of a misunderstanding between them had disappeared, and she chattered gaily about her son's education while they ascended the hill. They reached the castle; but she had probably overrated her strength, for they had hardly attained the garden when she turned

deadly pale, and pressed her trembling hand against her throbbing heart.

"It is nothing," she said; "it will pass."

He brought her a glass of water and hurried on to fetch a carriage. After a few moments she felt easier, and sat down on a bench to await his return. She bent her head, and clasping her hands, gave herself up to her thoughts about the far-off, dark future. But now, thank Heaven, she could think of it with more quiet of mind. The impending long parting did not look so threatening as before. As soon as they reached the hotel she was put to bed and the doctor sent for. He assured her it was nothing at all, ordered her some drops, and withdrew. She lay in her bed, pale and quiet, smiling sweetly at her husband whenever their eyes met. She felt neither dread nor pain. Having just now told him that he ought not to despair, she knew that she ought to prove the truth of this assertion herself, and she was equal to it. Had she not stood face to face with despair when the awful sentence was read to her, and had not succumbed? and was she now to tremble and murmur, now that she was with her husband, now that no misunderstanding or doubt existed any longer between them? And if her earthly bliss was short-lived, had it not been perfect?

Nadia rallied quickly. On the 1st of October they went to Switzerland, and proceeded thence to Italy. Volodia and his wife were not yet there; they could not tear themselves away from Paris. Afterwards they

went to Milan and Florence, and did not get to San-Remo till the beginning of November. Nor did they stay long. Even the varying blue waves of the Genoese bay seemed monotonous to them. They sighed for new impressions; and after a fortnight's stay, left for Florence, promising to return very quickly. But the gay Italian town kept them prisoners with its rich treasures of art and its bright society. So, instead of mentioning their return, Jenny, in her letters to Nadia, only talked of the many balls to which they were looking forward. But Dmitry and Nadia did not want them; the southern sun strengthened her, and the future lay bright and rosy before their eyes.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TWO years have passed. During this time very few changes had taken place in the lives of most of our personages. They had only been advancing slowly on the way allotted to them in life. The career of Boroffsky had not answered his high-flown expectations. His burning wish of becoming a cabinet minister had been frustrated. Whether envious voices had been raised against him, or his own presumptuous ways had exasperated his superiors, the fact was, that he was no longer looked upon favourably in the highest circles. The worst was, that all the measures he had proposed proved failures. When he saw this, he lost his self-command, and made one mistake after the other. In town his wife was accused of being the cause of it. She had become faithless to her programme, and had not sustained him in any way. He had meant to draw a narrow line round her life, but she had escaped him in an unexpected way. She broke at once with all her friends and admirers, and disappeared from the stage of life.

All that with which she had intended to fill up the void of her empty life suddenly became loathsome to her. She now devoted her time to other pursuits.

There was not a charitable institution in town of which she was not a member. But this did not suffice her. She went about among the filthy and needy, dressed in plain clothes, carrying comfort and help into houses where few great ladies ever put their feet. She prayed long and fervently. Did she find peace and comfort in these occupations? It is difficult to say. She seemed to want to expiate her sins and purify her soul from the shame she felt whenever she thought of the past.

Boris Sokolnitzky enjoyed the love of his subordinates in his government of Dnieprovsky as well as the flattering attention of his superiors. He owed this success especially to the open house he held and to his devoted manners to the ladies of the province. His wife did not seem, however, to be of the general opinion, for one morning she thought fit to leave her husband and return to Petersburg. No one knew exactly what had happened, but rumours were afloat that the young and sympathetic chief of the province had wasted his wife's dowry in a rather unchivalrous way. It was no easy matter to break this news to the old Count, for he adored his son, though he knew all his faults. He succeeded in bringing his daughter-in-law back to her husband, but he never felt the same afterwards, though he did not cease to carry his head as high as before, for he knew that he himself would never have stained his name. Thus an old fir-tree remains with head erect on

the height of the rocks, though its green branches have long ago been broken and carried off by the wind.

But the reader will want to hear something about Dmitry and Nadia, and to know what happened to Volodia and Jenny.

On a greyish day, about the end of September, an isvotshik, coming from the station, dashed up to the entrance door of the Hôtel de Petersburg in the district town of C——. The passenger, a grey-haired middle-aged man, having given his luggage to the porter, ascended the stairs to the second floor, where a prettily furnished room was shown to him. His face wore a weary expression, and the same weariness was visible in his gait and in his stooping chest. He locked the door and began to dress. He had hardly finished before a loud knocking was heard at the door. He opened, and recognised the strong, upright figure of Tomiline.

"Dmitry Alexandrovitch! at last!" the latter cried, with tears in his eyes.

They kissed each other affectionately. To judge from their appearance, no one would have said that there were thirty years between them, so aged had Dmitry got during these two years.

"You have come for good, I hope," said Tomiline; "you will stay with us now, won't you?"

Dmitry shook his head.

"Only for twenty-four hours; I have business to settle with my brother."

"And your son, where is he? Did you not bring him?"

"No; he is very delicate. I left him with an English lady with whom we got quite intimate in Italy; she was very kind to my poor Nadia, and nursed her in her last illness. She lives at Genoa. I am going back to her as quickly as I can, for I never feel easy when I am away from my child. I have none left on earth but him."

Nadia was no longer among the living. The winter which they had spent at San-Remo had done her a great deal of good, and Dmitry had almost ceased to be uneasy about her. In spring they returned to Heidelberg, to be near the famous doctor whom everybody praised for his tender care of his patients and for his marvellous cures. A son was born to them. The first three days passed without any bad symptoms. Dmitry began to breathe freely, busied himself about the child. He only regretted that the doctor did not allow him to go as often into his wife's room as he wished. The latter wanted to avoid all that could agitate her; even the child was left in the adjoining room. She had wanted to nurse him herself, but this he prohibited most decidedly. It was a mortification, of course, but it dwindled into nothing when compared to her overwhelming joy at the possession of her son.

On the fourth day there was a change; the doctor looked grave; he did not dare to pronounce the fatal

word of child-bed fever. But when he did, Dmitry knew that all hope was over. Strange to say, he did not feel astonished; he had known it all along, even through the perfect joy of the first days. Her strength was not great enough to carry her through the fever, but she lingered longer than stronger natures do. She hardly ever spoke to Dmitry in the intervals of delirium. She found it too hard to hint at their parting, now that it was at hand. Only just before the end—on the last day she had recovered her consciousness—she called him to her side to take leave of him.

"Do not forget your promise, Dmitry," she said, almost under her breath: "give a good education to our son; teach him to be a useful member of society. Do not despair yourself. Return home."

The last words were quite inaudible—it was a mere movement of the lips.

She lay quite calm till the end came on, with half-closed eyes. Her strength was ebbing away too quickly to allow her to speak. Only her hand sought Dmitry's, and her slender, transparent fingers softly pressed his. A few moments before she died he fancied he saw her lips move and heard her whisper, "Good-bye."

Tomiline did not insist on these details; Dmitry's grief was too fresh to be touched yet. They sat down and began to talk of his son. He answered readily; it was the only subject which interested him.

"But you are not going to have him entirely educated abroad, I suppose?" said Tomiline.

"There can hardly be any question now about his education; first of all he must be strengthened, and only the southern sun can do that. As soon as that object is obtained, I shall take him back to his ancestral home."

"Well, I hope to see you back in two years, and then you won't lead an idle life, I dare say."

"Don't try to fix a term, Feodor Vassilievitch, I beg of you. Certainly I know that I can't go on leading this roving life for ever. Poor Nadia besought me to return home and to take up my work again. On her account I should like to do it; but whenever I think of it, I feel an awful bitterness rising in my heart. I am unfit for any sort of work."

"Your brother has arrived, Dmitry Alexandrovitch," said a waiter, appearing at the door.

Tomiline and Dmitry went out to meet him. His gay young voice resounded on the stairs.

"How do you do, Mitia?" he cried. "How are you? Quite well?"

They kissed each other tenderly.

"Let us go into your room. How are you, Tomiline?"

Volodia shook hands with him, and then passed on into Dmitry's room.

In his gait and manner there was something

dignified and resolute. He looked as elegant as of old, and his beard gave him the appearance of greater virility. Provincial life had not left any traces on him; on the contrary, it had kept him young and fresh. In his dress there was perhaps a little affectation, but in his quality of the husband of a very pretty woman it was hardly to be wondered at.

"Well, my dear," said Volodia, "now tell me why you asked me to come to town to see you. Why did you not go on to Biälastolby? Jenny had your room put in order, and would have been delighted to welcome you."

Dmitry said that he was going away again on the following day. This answer struck Volodia as very odd, but seeing the suffering expression on his brother's face, he forbore to say anything more.

"Well, just as you like; but Jenny will be very, very sorry."

The brothers did not at once take up the business question which had brought them together at C——. They talked for a whole hour of their own affairs. Volodia did the greater part of the conversation. Dmitry answered shortly and unwillingly whenever he touched upon the past. Tomiline did not hinder their conversation; he was almost one of them.

"Now let us talk of business," said Dmitry, all of a sudden. "I do not know whether I shall ever return; therefore I have resolved to entrust you with the

management of the whole estate. I can't look after anything as long as I remain abroad. You will only have to send me the money I want. For this I must give you a power of attorney."

"No, Mitia, you must not do so. I had intended to ask you to divide the estate into two parts."

"No; this is much better, believe me. Later, if I should return, we can make all the changes you want."

Volodia did not insist, but told him in a clear, business-like way what the estate had yielded in the last years. Biälastolby had risen in value under Volodia's management, and something like 22,000 rubles would be the part allotted to each brother.

"Let us send for the lawyer at once," said Volodia; "we can conclude the arrangement upon whatever conditions you like."

"For ten years," answered Dmitry resolutely.

Volodia drew up the draft of the arrangement in large, distinct characters, then he rang the bell, and ordered the waiter to send for a lawyer, and to tell him to bring all that he wanted with him.

"Now, my dears," he said, addressing his brother and Tomiline, "won't you have some lunch? We might have it while the lawyer comes. We must be hungry after our journey, all of us, I suppose. Let us go down into the large dining-room, and tell them not to let any one in."

This was no sooner said than done. The Tartar announced in a loud voice "that no one was to enter the room where their nobilities pleased to have lunch." Volodia ordered three dishes, chose the wines, and behaved like a man who knows what he has to do. The lunch was perfect. Volodia talked incessantly, telling his brother of the alterations he had introduced at Biälastolby, of the bettered condition of the peasants, and of the new committees he had proposed to the Sobranie. Without exactly boasting of his success, he was evidently very glad to have some new interlocutor to listen to him.

"Oh, how I regret not to be able to show you how I am getting on with my farming with Feodor Vassilievitch's help. Our bridges are in perfect order, our hospitals splendid."

"And have you really patience enough to go on drudging in this way—mending holes, and struggling against opposition?"

"We were elected for that," answered Tomiline.

"We've conquered the opposition, as you call them; all the Liberal members have been got rid of."

They had just finished their coffee when the lawyer appeared. The business was quickly despatched, but evening was already setting in.

"Well, my dear," said Volodia, when the lawyer had left, "I must say good-bye to you, for Jenny is expecting me. So you are really not coming? No? Well then, another time, and God speed you.

But remember my advice—return to us; you'll see how much more quickly you will recover on your native soil."

They kissed again, Volodia even cried a little; then he shook hands with Tomiline, and sat down in the carriage. The horses started at a quick pace, and soon carried him out of their sight, the little bells tinkling gaily.

Dmitry looked long and lingeringly after him. Tomiline smoked his pipe in silence.

"Well, Feodor Vassileivitch," said Dmitry suddenly, "he is as happy as the day is long. I quite forgot to ask after his wife. Is she as pretty as she was?"

"She is not a bit changed; just such a rosy, lovely, and graceful being as before, and Vladimir Alexandrovitch just as much in love as ever. She can twist him round her little finger as much as she likes. But when the wife is clever and beautiful—this is real happiness."

A short silence ensued. Dmitry drummed on the window pane with his fingers.

"Well," he said, "I thought that our provincial life was shallow, and that an honest man could not live amidst all these intrigues about such very petty matters. But I see I was mistaken; and do you know why? It is because we Russians are fond of boasting of great doings, and scorn modest affairs. What business is not modest in the beginning? Even

the English parliament did not begin with conquering the world."

Tomiline blew a cloud of smoke out of his pipe, and answered somewhat slowly,—

"Well, it is never too late to mend, Dmitry Alexandrovitch; you may still turn back to a work that has grown distasteful to you. Now go and take care of your son, that he may thrive,—we want healthy people,—and then return with him, that he may become a Russian. You will be about forty years old by that time; it won't be too late to try.

"Perhaps," whispered Dmitry, almost inaudibly.

Tomiline took leave of him.

Autumnal twilight had already set in, yet Tomiline was obliged to go home for the night. Dmitry remained behind alone, quite lost in thought.

The noise in the streets was subsiding, the carriages were getting rarer, the gas lamps before the windows of the hotel had been lit. An overwhelming feeling of isolation, never experienced so strongly abroad, overcame Dmitry. Here, not far from his ancestral home, where his happy childhood had been spent, where he had been so intensely happy and so unspeakably wretched, this isolation rose before him like a dreadful spectre. He felt a sudden sickly longing for this Biälastolby, which he had refused to visit with his brother. Who knew whether he would ever see it again, if he did not go now to worship the relics of his lost happiness? He had

plenty of time. He rose, rang the bell, and ordered a carriage to be sent for. His servant gave him a startled look, but obeyed in silence. Dmitry waited with a feverish, sickening impatience for the tarantass. Having once taken the resolution to revisit his paternal home, the longing for it grew every moment, and made his heart throb and quiver.

The wheels of the carriage were audible in the street. The waiter came to announce that all was ready. The horses were small and looked overworked, the tarantass itself had a sorry aspect, the bells jingled with a cracked sound, and the figure of the coachman, in his torn cape looked rather wretched against the darkening sky. The evening was warm, but overcast; it was slightly drizzling. The yellow moon was floating on the border of the horizon, throwing its soft, dim light on the far-off fields. It was not a landed-proprietor who was returning to his own estate, in the flush of his pride and manhood, but a weary, broken-hearted traveller, who, having lost his way, crept stealthily back through the gloom of the night. In the meantime, all the old dear, well-known places, scattered along the road, rose pale and misty out of the evening darkness before his eyes. There was the dear old cytisus, the crown of which had been once singed by lightning; there the village on the hillock, with its scattered houses. Here, leading down to the hollow, was the low oak copse, where

he had so often, as a boy, been looking out for bustards, his gun in his hand; and here, at last, the hollow itself before the winding towards Biälastolby. The wood reached on both sides down to the road, and the night wind softly stirred the rustling leaves. Even the wood was now left behind. Just before the turning towards the village, the road branched off in the direction of the castle; here Dmitry stopped the coachman, and ordering him to drive slowly on, jumped out of the carriage, and walked over the dike, not wishing to be seen.

In order to avoid every sort of meeting, almost as if hiding before the people at the manor-house, Dmitry entered the garden by a back door. The first steps which he took in the garden convinced him of the great changes which had taken place there: the former copse had entirely disappeared; instead of the dense, juicy park grass was now a velvet-like English lawn. The present flower-beds were very unlike the old ones. Fragrant flowers were surrounded by groups of dense green plants, with many-coloured, whimsical leaves. Between them rose the splendid heads of the autumnal dahlias and asters.

A fountain had been erected on the lawn before the house, and a marble nymph brought from Italy by Volodia reflected its cold beauty in the fresh waters. And the house itself, how changed it was! Its old walls had been covered with white stucco,

just as the cheeks of old people turn white in their old age. Different architectural ornaments — the result of the local architect's studies — broke the simplicity of its original lines. Dmitry had the greatest difficulty in recognising his old Biälastolby. His heart sank within him. A new era had erased his dear old remembrances, and this looked almost like a sacrilege. He suddenly felt quite old. It was as if a new generation had grown up during his absence, and carried off all that was dear to him. He wandered farther on in the garden. Everywhere he met with something new and strange; only under the old lime-tree he found the old bench again on which he had confessed his love to Nadia and received her first kiss. This was the sole surviving relic of a dearly beloved past. He threw himself down upon it, and bursting into a violent storm of sobs, cried as people only cry in their first youth. Among the rustle of the already stripped branches he suddenly fancied he heard soft whisperings. Was it his mother, or perhaps his beloved Nadia, who bent down to him to breathe sweet comforting words in his ear during these moments of heart-breaking despair? Beloved shadows, forgotten, as it seemed, by others, surrounded him, telling him that though his life and his love were buried in the past, love never dies in the heart.

The sky was clearing up. The clouds had disappeared; they were crowding on the border of the

horizon. The full moon overflooded the old trees with its milk-white rays. Its eternal, unchangeable light seemed to imply that high above this changeable world reigns an eternal, undying love.

Dmitry rose and walked on towards the house. The drawing-room facing the terrace was all ablaze with light. Here everything was so changed that it would have been impossible to recognise it. He looked in through the open doors to see if he could remember the past, but the present elegant furniture did not put him in mind of its former proprietor. Dmitry drew nearer and listened to the voices that penetrated to him through the doors of the adjoining dining-room. He went close up to the window and carefully opened the shutter a little. His brother was sitting at the tea-table, eagerly talking to his wife; but Dmitry could not hear what he said. Jenny was leaning her elbow on the table, listening to her husband, and her beautiful bare arm looked dazzlingly white in the pale light of the lamps. The light also fell on her face, which she bent forward, and he could see her lovely features. Suddenly a merry peal of laughter broke from her lips, and immediately after a hearty kiss resounded on her blooming cheek.

A short silence ensued. Jenny yawned, and her eyes twinkled. Volodia got up, rang the bell, and ordered the footman to clear the table. As soon as this was done, Volodia's arm stole round his

wife's waist, and he murmured some tender words in her ears.

Dmitry walked slowly back to his tarantass. For a few moments he wavered, whether he ought not to turn back and spend a few hours under the roof of his paternal home. But what for? What had he in common with this young happiness? He sat down in the wretched carriage and ordered the coachman to drive back to town. He left Biälastolby without experiencing the slightest bitterness towards his brother. Why should this young and prosperous life not succeed to his own ruined and shattered one, just as in nature a rich and splendid harvest succeeds to the one which a biting night-frost has nipped in the bud? Dmitry remembered his son, and this thought gave him new strength and courage. What did he care how his own life was spent, if his son grew and prospered? His whole future was wrapped up in this child. Human beings cannot live without a future, any more than a plant without the sun. Dmitry suddenly started up and gazed intently at the fields and the road, overflooded with the bright light of the moon. Everything had, so to say, started out of the deep darkness; the dim outlines of the trees and the manor-house, which had looked so dark a few hours before, now appeared bathed in silvery light. His heart seemed to rise within him, whispering in his ear that night does not last for ever, and that morning

dawns again in life as well as in nature. Happy the man who does not lose his faith in the struggles of life, and who is ready to take up his cross in daily labour!

THE END.

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